BALANCING ON THE FULCRUM BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR: A GUIDE TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS OF PASTORS

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ABSTRACT

BALANCING ON THE FULCRUM BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR: A GUIDE TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS OF PASTORS

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Today's Church finds itself in a rapid state of change which has put a downward pressure on attendance, financial giving, and volunteerism to name a few. In addition, new pastors graduating from seminary and entering into their first call as a solo pastor or moving from an associate pastor to a senior pastor are expected to be proficient in all areas of their vocation, focus on the mission and vision of their church, and be good administrators. As a result, many pastors, especially those with reduced resources, are faced with a dizzying sense of pressure to be all things to all people.

Unfortunately, most seminaries have yet to recognize the need to train soon-to-be clergy in areas of administration. While I would not argue the need for the appropriate depth of theological training, instruction in the skills of teaching and preaching, and the requisite need to offer pastoral care, the lack of attention to the administrative aspect has created a gap in the skill set of pastors. This gap, if left unaddressed, creates frustration for pastors and may contribute to the increased burnout felt by pastors.

The solution may lie in additional resources that combine the covenantal nature of the pastoral relationship with the secular skills needed to administrate effectively in hiring, delegating, holding people accountable, understanding and resolving conflicts, as well as the basics of church finance. This research examines various aspects of need and culminates in a training guide to address the same.

To my daughter, Danielle K. Aguilar, who has been my friend, my champion, my supporter, my editor, and who never let me quit.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over a decade ago, I never would have dreamed that I would be a bi-vocational lay pastor devoting more time to ministry then to my business. And while I did not necessarily see myself in this role, others around me, particularly my pastor, Rev. Lissa Smith, did and encouraged me in my journey. And not only did she encourage me but she threw me into the deep end of the pool, confident that I would swim.

I want to take this moment in time to thank all of those on my site team, Rev. Lissa Smith, Rev. Leanne Strommen, Dr. Jerry Rudmann, Alan Purvis, and Jim Bogenreif, who tirelessly read all of my work and offered suggestions, encouragement, and aid as I sometimes struggled and sometimes triumphed along this journey. Without their steadying influence and unwavering support, I am not sure this project would have come together in the way that it did.

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Finally, I want to thank my husband, Damien, who has supported me through four degree programs and encouraged my work both in ministry and in the world. And my two daughters, Danielle and Christina, who have always been my best friends and believed I could do anything I set my mind to accomplish.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING....1

CHAPTER TWO
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE....20
DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP....30
BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP....31
CONCLUSION....37

CHAPTER THREE
IMPLEMENTATION – WHAT I PLANNED AND WHAT I ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED!....39
GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND EVALUATIONS....40
GOAL ONE....40
GOAL TWO....49
GOAL THREE....62
WHAT'S NEXT!....78

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH QUESTIONS....79
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL....79
OLD TESTAMENT....82
Leadership and Style Lessons from Moses....85
Leadership and Style Lessons from Joshua....90
Leadership and Style Lessons from Nehemiah....95
Conclusion of the Old Testament Words and Examples....101
NEW TESTAMENT....102
Leadership Style and Lessons of Jesus....108
Leadership Style and Lessons from Acts....114
Leadership Style and Lessons from Paul....119
Future Leadership....124
New Testament Conclusion....125
FEMALE BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP....128
20TH CENTURY THEOLOGIANS....132
CONCLUSION – AN APPLIED BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP....136
PSYCHO-SOCIAL....140
GENDER BIAS IN CHURCH AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP....141
A WOMANIST VIEW OF GENDER BIAS....150
GENERATIONAL BIAS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP....153
CULTURAL BIAS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP....159

CONCLUSION – SOLUTIONS FOR ADDRESSING BIAS 163
ORGANIZATIONAL.....166
HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP THEORY IN THE SECULAR WORLD.....167
ADOPTION OF SECULAR LEADERSHIP THEORIES TO MINISTRY 176
The Charismatic Leader 178
The Transactional Leader.....180
The Transformational Leader.....182
The Servant Leader.....184
PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP 186
CONCLUSION.....192

CHAPTER FIVE
MINISTERIAL COMPETENCY.....193
PREACHER.....193
WORSHIP LEADER.....200
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....205

APPENDICES 210
APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL 211
APPENDIX B: SEMINARY GRADUATE QUESTIONNAIRE.....341
APPENDIX C: MONKEY SURVEY SEMINARY GRADUATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES.....344
APPENDIX D: RECENT SEMINARY GRADUATE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS 354
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EXECUTIVE PASTORS....404
APPENDIX F: EXECUTIVE PASTOR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS....405
APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS 459
APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTION.....461
APPENDIX I: TRAINING IN CHURCH ADMINISTRATION WORKBOOK.....479
APPENDIX J: POWERPOINT SLIDES FROM WORKSHOPS.....579
APPENDIX K: SURVEY RESPONSE COMMENTS FROM WORKSHOPS 599
APPENDIX L: DISAGGREGATED MONKEY SURVEY RESULTS 602
APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM.....626

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....627

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

I am a bi-vocational, commissioned lay pastor for the Presbytery of Los Ranchos[1] located in Orange County, California. The road to my ministry position was long and circuitous, but this road provided me with education, skills, and experience that are somewhat unique in my ministry setting. The lens with which I view the intersection of the secular and the sacred seems to differ from those whose life has existed only in a ministry setting. This differing viewpoint has created a curiosity about God's intentions for our world that is a compilation of my life experiences.

As a youth and young woman, I was unchurched. My father was raised Roman Catholic but had wandered away from his faith tradition and my mother, at age 14 having lost her father in a tragic airplane accident, was angry at God and thus had no interest in church. As a result, my only real experience in a church environment was as a teenager when I independently joined a Methodist church so that I could participate in the youth group. I was not really interested in Jesus, God, or anything related to the Bible - I just wanted to have fun with this large youth group. But as an adult, I was acquainted with a family who endured the tremendous loss of a teenage son, but did so with incredible

[1] The Presbyterian Church of America (PCUSA) is organized into regional groups geographically and these groups are called Presbyteries of which ministers of word and sacrament are members.

grace and resilience. When I asked how they could endure such pain, they spoke to me of their deep and abiding faith in Jesus. This touched me and I searched out what this "faith thing" was all about. The end result was my own salvific encounter with the risen Lord and my life began to change.

I knew nothing about the Bible, and the stories contained therein, but I began attending a small, conservative Lutheran church[2]. I attended Bible studies, taught in the nursery, sang in the choir, and became an active, engaged member along with my husband and my two children. That was, until my marriage crumbled and I decided to obtain a divorce. This particular Lutheran church was part of a small subset of the Norwegian Lutherans and as such had very strong prohibitions against divorce. The pastor and elder of the church told me that if I persisted in this decision, I would be sentencing myself to hell and risking the spiritual lives of my children. I did divorce and as a result, was prohibited from many church activities - I was an outcast. For the sake of my children, I continued to attend, but in my heart instead of being unchurched, I was dechurched. A colleague in ministry once told me that there is no hurt like church hurt and he was right. Instead of helping me through a difficult period, embracing me with Jesus-like love, and showing me forgiveness, I felt pushed away, ashamed, and unsure of the state of my eternal life. But God had a hold of me and did not let me go.

We eventually moved away and through my daughter's involvement in a Presbyterian youth group, we began attending a local Presbyterian church. This new church knew I was divorced but had no "rules" about what I could and could not do within the church. Spiritually, I was holding back, not yet sure of my own relationship

[2] This Church is affiliated with Lutheran Brethren of America headquartered in Fergus, MN. They are a very conversative and allow only men to serve as pastors and elders.

with God, but willing to continue to see what God and God's church might hold for me. Simultaneous to these events and prior to my divorce, I returned to the workforce. At that moment, I had no intention of building a career or going back to school, but little did I know that this decision to work, along with the company I worked for, would change the trajectory of my life.

I initially took a part-time position as an office assistant for a very small countertop fabrication and installation company. Previously, I had been employed as an office training coordinator for a savings and loan so this position would be easy, or so I thought. I had never worked for a small company and I had to learn on the fly as there was no time for training. Over the course of five years, the company began to grow and I grew with it. By the early '80s, I was the general manager and working full-time, but it was becoming increasingly clear to me that I lacked training in many areas that were necessary to manage our small staff and to enable the company to grow. I decided that I needed a strong grounding in business, particularly in relation to finance, so I enrolled at California State University, Fullerton, seeking a BA in finance. Because I was working full-time and was, by this juncture, a single mother, it took eight long years to achieve my goal. But it was worth it because with every passing year, I gained a deeper knowledge of accounting, finance, and general business management, a knowledge that I was able to put to immediate use. And then my life direction was changed again when my then business partner (by now I was a shareholder) was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness and no longer had the strength or desire to continue in business.

By then, the business had grown from less than $100,000 to $1,000,000 in annual sales and a buyer, someone we knew and trusted, approached us about purchasing the

company. I had mixed feelings about this, but I knew it was a necessary move for my partner. The new owner did not want to keep me on as he felt the staff would not adapt to him as the owner as long as I was there. At the same time, I had come to the realization that I was reaching a cap on my own abilities to manage a growing business so I used this opportunity to enter into a Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at the Anderson School at UCLA.

The program at Anderson was intense and challenged me to rethink all I thought I knew about managing a business. The focus of every course was very strategic in nature and designed to expand our thinking around issues related to the deployment of capital – financial capital and human capital. Every class would have a series of case studies taken from real-life companies and situations. This allowed us to analyze a given set of criterion and then discuss possible problems and solutions. Over the course of two years, as I reflected back on my previous management abilities, I came to realize that I had been a micro-manager. I tried to control every aspect of my area of responsibility, and became frustrated and angry with people who were slower than me or who approached problem-solving in a way that differed from my approach. Admittedly, I saw people as instruments or objects I needed to get the job done my way and in my timeframe. I was, what some call, managing "in the box"; deceiving myself by justifying my point of view and in doing so, managed people as objects instead of people.[3] By the time I graduated, I knew I needed to move from a micro-manager to more of a macro-manager, with the same attention to detail but the ability to see the larger scope.

[3] The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception Getting out of the Box* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2018), 21.

During the last year of my MBA program, the company we had sold was on the verge of becoming insolvent and the owner asked me to come back in and help him analyze what had gone wrong. Utilizing some of my new skills, I quickly determined the company had developed issues in almost every area of business. The owner was selling the product for less than cost, he had not established any metrics to measure the effectiveness of both the production and installation teams, and he had underestimated the challenges of managing a heavily Latino workforce.[4] After discussing the issues with him, he hired me as a consultant and turned over complete authority to me. After my graduation, he made me an officer and shareholder. He stepped away from the daily operations and I took up the reins again. Within two years, we were back in the black and within eight years, the company had grown from a million in annual revenue to ten million and then eighteen million within several more years.

While that growth may seem impressive, it was hard won. I am a woman owning and operating a company in the field of contracting – a field that is essentially the domain of men. As a woman, I had to demonstrate not only my business savvy but also a deep understanding of the actual processes involved in the fabrication and installation of a custom-finished countertop. My male counterparts would only grant me respect when I could show them that I had mastered the mechanics of machinery, materials, fabrication, and installation plus I held an advanced degree in business that most of my male counterparts did not hold.

[4] Southern California's unskilled labor force is dominated primarily by people from Mexico as well as Central American countries. Most were recent immigrants, spoke little English, and whose cultural context differed from ours.

Unfortunately for women in ministry, similar truths still hold. Amy Jackson, in her article "The Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," states that women face unique challenges in ministry that their male counterparts often do not face. They need to be concerned with the type of clothing they wear and the fit, concerns over where to attach a mic pack, use of language viewed as "harsh" or "soft", and existing gender biases on how they will manage both a family and ministry.[5]

These issues, while seemingly minor, can create challenges for both women in business and women in ministry. A female colleague in ministry told me that she felt that being a woman pastor is very lonely given that the field is still dominated by men. Whether I like this or not, there remain expectations for women in leadership that are different than those for men. With all this said, many of the lessons I learned in my years in business translated to my time in ministry. I learned that, in addition to the cultural sensitivities of being a woman in a man's world and a woman leader/owner of a primarily Latino workforce, to be successful in leadership is predicated on being successful in the management of people. I believe this is true whether you are managing a secular business or working within your sacred calling. Managing people often comes down to building relationships that allow people to grow, to innovate, and also to fail, because sometimes the best learning comes from failure.

My story continued to evolve as during this same period of growth for the company, I had become very involved in a new church, in reading and studying scripture,

[5] Amy Jackson, "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," *Christianity Today,* 2, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/blessings-and-burdens-for-women-leaders.html.

and in leadership - first as a deacon and then as an elder. As I became increasingly involved in ministry, I felt an overwhelming call to understand my faith better, find ways to engage my faith in my business, and to utilize my business skills in my leadership in the church. The end result was my decision to enroll in seminary and step back to see what God may be calling me to do. After four years of attending seminary while managing my growing business, I graduated with a Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) with an emphasis in Biblical Studies.

While seminary provided me with a great theological foundation and specific skills related to exegesis, teaching, and preaching, I quickly came to realize that there were few, if any, classes on the application of biblical principles to business leadership. I felt the desire to understand the biblical principles of leadership so that I could apply them to my own business. There were certainly business principles I had learned, but they did not always translate well biblically. For example, businesses seek profit because without it the business ceases to exist, but should profit be the main motive? What about the lives and well-being of all of those who worked for the company and their families? I felt well-equipped to manage the business based upon my business education but I could no longer ignore the desire to align my business goals with my sense of calling as a child of God.

The more I sought out a theology of leadership, specifically in the areas of administration that had within it embedded practical and applied theological principles, the more I came to realize that the information and formal study in this specific area was scarce. Yes, there were classes in practical theology but they focused more on narrow areas of ministry, i.e., youth and mission, and less on the everyday tasks of running a

church and for me, running a business. There were opportunities for pastoral leadership training via internships and while helpful, these were more focused on the pastoral care side rather than the practical leadership and administrative side of ministry. In addition, there were a smattering of classes in the theology of leadership but these were offered as electives rather than a core requirement. Dr. Frank, in his article on "Leadership and Administration: An Emerging Field in Practical Theology," states that this field of study lacks any "real coherence across institutional settings."[6] Additionally, he correctly states that those that possess skills in administrative leadership are often lay people with little to no formal theological training.[7] This article was written in 2006, and it appears that little has changed in this area of study.

During those years at seminary, I had many opportunities to talk to people excited to begin their ministry careers. I would often query them on what specific training they had received in managing staff and volunteers, and also in understanding the nuts and bolts of finance and facilities management. Many, if not most, had very little, if any, practical experience in this area and had not received any additional training in seminary. They felt that God would provide them with whatever they needed to be effective. And while I would never argue that God gives us all we need, I also believe God has given us scriptural examples of what can and will go wrong as well as ways to correct the same. I wondered if they had given thought to the geographical and cultural context of any ministry call that they would accept.

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[6] Thomas Edward Frank, "Leadership and Administration: An Emerging Field in Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* (2006): 114.

[7] Ibid.

One lesson I learned in my conversations with both seminary students and my colleagues in ministry was that each congregation possesses a specific culture and a congregational identity that often has developed over many years. The specific cultural context is likely to impact an individual's ability to have their leadership authority accepted, particularly for new pastors entering without a full awareness of this context. The authors of the book *Studying Congregations: A Handbook* make a valid point about the need for any new pastor to have a good grasp of the existing congregational culture.[8] Within any group of people that gather as a community of faith, common traits, i.e., likes and dislikes, language spoken, social and cultural heritage, even ethnicity would not be uncommon. It would not be unusual for a congregation to be fairly homogeneous in its makeup and will likely reflect the community within which they are embedded.[9] This culture could be different depending on their geography, their size, and whether they are urban, suburban, or rural. For a new pastor, understanding these factors will be important keys to understanding how, as a newcomer, they might view and fit into this existing cultural framework. I witnessed this first-hand when our founding pastor retired and a new pastor was hired. I was part of the pastor nominating committee and even we, with all our combined theological and business skills, failed to take his existing context and our existing context into account. As a result, his leadership was not accepted and he was forced to resign after 18 months.

After graduating, I became increasingly involved in the ministry work of my church and my Presbytery and this involvement increased my awareness of how the lack

[8] Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 82.

[9] Ibid., 80.

of practical training in the area of administration often created an area of frustration for pastors. And while it may seem simple to take business concepts and just apply them to ministry, they do not always translate well and may create more problems than they solve. In addition, business principles can fall victim to the "flavor of the week" mentality. A new book, a new concept is presented as the be-all and end-all solution to a specific problem in business, only to be replaced by the next one.

How should church leaders and pastors decide on what will be effective in their ministry context? In the sense that we are all impacted by our context, those called to ministry are no different than those who are called to work in the secular world. We all come from a variety of contexts that color how we view the world, how we interact in the world, and how we allow that same world to act upon us. What is different for church leaders is what we are called to accomplish. As disciples of Christ, we are called to demonstrate a theology of leadership that can integrate secular skills but is guided by a biblical framework. This is easier said than done, particularly in the world of post-Christendom.

My awareness of this need, combined with the desire of my church and my Presbytery, led to my being commissioned as a lay pastor, also known as a Commissioned Ruler Elder (CRE). While this role exists within other Presbyteries across the United States, I was, and still am, the first to hold this role within my church and my Presbytery. In this role, I am often called to preach in my church, as well as in other churches. I am authorized to officiate the sacraments of communion and baptism as well as moderate Session[10], both in my church and in other churches within our Presbytery as

[10] Each PCUSA Church is governed by a Session comprised of Ruler Elders and moderated by the head Pastor.

needed. I participate in the everyday life of our church by preaching, teaching, writing, leading devotional studies, and conducting pastoral visits as needed.

In addition to this expanded role, I am a member of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). In this role, I am responsible for tracking the various academic stages of both our inquirers and candidates and reviewing the seminary transcripts of each of these individuals annually. To become a minister of Word and Sacrament within the PCUSA, you must complete a specific set of academic criteria, including a 400-hour internship and a 400-hour clinical pastor education (CPE), both in approved settings. Both of these real-life educational requirements are meant to help the students gain experience in pastoral care (CPE) and exposure to a different church environment via the internship. However, these are the only "real-life" requirements within the overall academic requirement. Exposure to the realities of managing staff, volunteers, and the dynamics of congregational life are sorely lacking.

In the midst of my work as a commissioned lay pastor and member of CPM, the pandemic hit and life changed for everyone. Life for church leaders, and particularly pastors, has been in flux over the last several decades, but with the onset of the pandemic and subsequent mandatory closures, the rate of change accelerated. The COVID-19 pandemic forced a change in the way many churches "do church". These changes manifested in the way we created and conducted worship services, the way we ministered to our members, and the ways in which we interacted in our community. The idea of adopting a methodical leadership approach that would take our twenty-first century world into account was replaced with a reactive sense of what do we do now – how will we survive?

Initially, as the first mandatory closure was announced, many churches, mine included, thought this would be a short-term situation. We decided to stream our services using the technology we had quickly available – the iPhone. We joined a platform service that would allow us to use the video feature of the iPhone and we streamed that live to Facebook. But as time stretched out, it became increasingly clear that we would not be back to in-person worship for a while and thus we invested in a more robust streaming set-up and began to stream to both our website and to Facebook. We made small changes to the worship service, pre-recorded most of our music, and hoped for the best. Our leadership team decided to stick closely to the CDC recommendations on both closure and gradual reopening as the pandemic waxed and waned. And we were quite proud of ourselves and our ability to pivot quickly, that is until we and our congregants began to feel the fatigue that uncertainty brings, and cracks within the support of our decisions began to appear. In an article about this phenomenon from "The Praxis Journal," the authors state that while we believed we were only in a temporary situation, which they likened to being in a blizzard or winter season, we were actually entering an age not dissimilar to an ice age – and age that was likely to last much longer.[11]

By mid 2021, it became abundantly clear that we had lost members and with that membership loss, we had a reduction in giving. This aligned with the anecdotal information we were receiving from our colleagues in ministry. The added stress of trying to keep our congregation spiritually vital while adhering to the ever-changing recommendations of the CDC, took a toll on our leadership team and especially our

[11] Andy Crouch, Kurt Keilhacker, and Dave Blanchard, "Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup," *The Praxis Journal* (March 20, 2020), https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff.

pastor. She expressed frustration over the seemingly constant stream of complaints that seemed to be based more in polarizing political rhetoric than in the compassion or care for others. In the book *Studying Congregations,* the authors make the point about the cultural context of a given church and the importance that church leadership become aware of the implicit understandings and groundings within their local church as it might relate to the greater community within which they are embedded.[12] The stress of the pandemic had certainly revealed biases that heretofore were more implicit but were becoming much more explicit, and that created a tense and challenging atmosphere for both our pastor and our leadership team as we endeavored to minister to both sides of the divide.

There is an interesting quality about relationships - they never seem to remain the same. There is an ongoing negotiation with people that consists of a give and take that while necessary, can also be exhausting. But as the church, we are called to function in community as the body of Christ. In that community, we need to recognize that our commitment to each other demands and affirms that we be reciprocal in the give and take that mirrors God's love for us.[13] But while that has always been true, it is much more challenging in the pressure-cooker that ministry has become. Navigating this landscape of variable changes requires the ability to be adaptable – to be able to shift your perspective and lean into the perspectives of those you are both pastoring and supervising. In their book *Leadership and Self-Deception Getting Out of the Box,* the authors call this concept being either "in the box" or "out of the box." When you are "in the box" you "experience

[12] Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations*, 80.

[13] David R. Tomlinson, *Leading a Church to Maturity in Love* (Durham: Sacristy Press, 2019), 16.

others not as people with their own lives but objects within our lives."[14] This then skews your view of them and yourself and inhibits your ability to interact with them in a positive way.

In conversations with my pastor and other pastors in ministry, it became very evident to me that the stress of the pandemic had unveiled the vulnerabilities of those who were suffering both physical and psychological manifestations of managing in this time of change and uncertainty. They yearned for a return to what they remembered as a simpler time - a time when that reciprocity of love seemed easier to achieve. They began to question their call to ministry and wonder if the time had come to seek a new career or a new call. These feelings were not unique to our geography or our faith tradition.

Throughout 2021, experts in human resources have tracked what they are calling "a turnover tsunami," as professionals in most industries consider their careers in view of the ongoing pandemic, and submit resignations to their employers.[15] Whether or not this is a transitory event or a long-term change, only time will tell. Regardless of the duration, the same phenomena are happening within our churches. The realities of managing church life during the ongoing pandemic, coupled with congregational strife and divisiveness, have many pastors struggling with a sense of being overwhelmed. The article "Has the Pandemic Made Your Pastor Want to Quit?," quotes a 2021 Barna study that indicated that 29 percent of pastors have given serious consideration to changing

[14] The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception*, 187.

[15] Christa Cordova, "Has the Pandemic Made Your Pastor Want to Quit?," The Better Samaritan Blog Forum, *Christianity Today*, entry posted June 2, 2021, https://www.christianitytoday.com/better-samaritan/2021/june/has-pandemic-made-your-pastor-want-to-quit-probably.html.

their career.[16] And if this were not pressure enough, some churches have experienced a marked decline in financial giving which is adding even more pressure to an already stressed pastorate.[17]

As I watched the pandemic take its toll within my PCUSA church and the churches within my Presbytery, I saw first-hand how much more difficult the management of the paid staff and volunteers was becoming, and how the impact of financial shortfalls were creating tough decisions for both staff and facilities management. For churches with a single pastor, this becomes even more apparent as they attempt to juggle their duties as a pastor which includes creating a worship experience every week, preaching God's Word, and pastoring to their congregation combined with a heavy carrying of the administrative load that has been placed on their shoulders.

I remember only too well walking into the head pastor's office of my church in late 2020 when we all realized this pandemic was not going anywhere only to have her express her frustration over having to manage staff while facing a decline in giving and facilities that needed work. After listening to her and asking several clarifying questions, it was clear to me that she felt that properly managing both paid and volunteer staff was not within her skill-set; that she had never had training in this area, and instead learned only by experience, working hard to avoid dealing with staff issues. Furthermore, the pandemic exacerbated these individuals' tolerance for instructions of any type. And she was not alone in this angst. Several pastors within our presbytery had expressed similar

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Susan Barnett, Angie Androit, and Jashalund Royston, "COVID-19: Presbyteries, Congregations and New Worshiping Communities Respond to the Pandemic" (2020): 10, *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Research Services*.

views and were unclear what was expected of them in managing their churches. One pastor, whose previous career had given him good skills in managing both financial and human capital, told me that without these skills, his job would be impossible. He had originally thought he wanted to be an executive pastor charged with these same duties, but was now wary of trying to be a pastor and a leader that had to hold people accountable while trying to demonstrate the biblical principles of love.

And while Covid has magnified this problem, it is neither new to church leadership nor unique. A pastor of a mid-sized church wrote an article back in 1999, published in *Christianity Today*, and then republished March 2022. He stated his leadership problem consists of leading a church that absolutely needed him to retain his skills as pastor, lover of people, and good preacher, while having equally good skills in managing people, including setting salaries, resolving conflict, and developing them as leaders as well as being able to fundraise, accelerate the rate of the growth within the church, and improve churchwide communication. He had been trained in the normal areas of exegesis, systemic theology, spiritual counseling, and hermeneutics but not in any of these other areas and as a result, he was performing poorly.[18] The result of this realization was the need for additional training – training that he would need to seek out on his own if he were to succeed.[19] I believe this pastor is typical of many pastors. The sacred reasons that sought them to enter ministry collided with the secular necessities of the same.

[18] Matthew Woodley, "Good Pastor, Lousy Leader," *Christianity Today*, July, 1999, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1999/summer/9l3035.html.

[19] Ibid.

And if this need wasn't enough in its own right, the stressors of the pandemic combined with acknowledged reduction in church attendance post-Christendom, has further accelerated the rate of decline. The results from a 2008 Gallup Poll found that 42% of people in America attended church. But when they repolled in 2017, that number had dropped to 38%.[20] With this exodus, the post-Covid church has seen a decline in congregational expertise, finances, and as a result, staffing. This has created a gap and may be requiring pastors to adopt a broader skill set than they may have been required to have prior to this paradigm shift. Now pastors must not only have the requisite skills required for pastoring a church, i.e., preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, but now need good administrative skills that include human resource management, including the management of paid staff versus volunteer staff, the ability to manage the dynamic of conflict, finance, and proper facilities use.

My years in business combined with my education in the same have provided me with a slightly different context to view ministry. With this comes the concern of how to apply the secular concepts in business to the practical needs of ministry while maintaining a strong sense of the sacred. Part of the problem may be attributed to the definition of leadership. In the business world, leadership might be defined as the ability to lead a company such that it performs at the top of its class in sales, profit, and employee satisfaction and retention, but in ministry, what stands as a good definition? Rev. Dr. Ivan Pitts, one of my current professors, stated a definition that I had never heard but felt was concise and accurate. He defined leadership in ministry as "the art of

[20] Frank Newport, "Church Leaders and Declining Religious Service Attendance," *Gallup,* 7 September, 2018, https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/242015/church-leaders-declining-religious-service-attendance.aspx.

influencing people to move from their agenda to God's agenda." In my preliminary research, it would appear that there is an area of praxis often missing in ministry preparation, i.e., a clearly stated theology of leadership whose principles can be applied to the secular tasks that lay within the sacred calling of ministers. This is more than preaching God's Word, and more than pastoral care. It is creating a leadership environment that is both dynamic and adaptable while maintaining accountability.

Pastors, by the nature of their positions, have implicit levels of authority – authority to conduct worship, preach God's Word, and engage with, and often manage, both paid staff and volunteers. Unfortunately, this implicit authority is not always recognized by those within the congregation. This requires that the pastor establish a level of trust and authenticity such that those in the congregation recognize and accept this authority. Pastors have the dual task of having to balance their sense of authenticity to their call from God, while demonstrating competency in areas that may often feel unrelated to their ministry and theological training. To me, this begs the question of how pastors can manage all of these areas while maintaining spiritual integrity and not suffering a complete burnout? Just like managers in the business world, pastors are confronted with problems and situations that are both complex and ever-changing. Ignoring these problems, hoping that they will somehow resolve themselves, is at best foolhardy. Problems left unresolved can often lead to even bigger problems making the solutions that much more complex and difficult to administer.

So, in a world that needs God's love more than ever but faced with unique ministry challenges, the questions remain - how does a pastor direct, supervise, and at times, terminate both staff and volunteers while remaining their pastor and often their

confidant? What are the theological issues surrounding and supporting these skills and how does one person decide what gets priority? For my church and my pastor, my business skill set combined with my theological education put me in the position to ease some of the administrative load with which my pastor was struggling. But this is not necessarily the case in many churches as the lay leaders may have solid secular training but lack an equally robust theological training. My journey, both spiritual and secular, brought me to this time and place where I felt called to seek out answers to these questions and in doing so, provide the badly need assistance to those both entering the ministry and those in ministry.

Having now completed the work, my research analyzed what currently exists in terms of a theology of leadership and how adaptable it may be to the administrative skill set of people management that is part of the work in ministry. I attempted to provide a clearly stated theology of leadership but found that it was not as black and white as I had hoped. Instead, I found that a theology of leadership must be nuanced to a specific leader and the current demands on that leader. Only then can I assess the specific skill areas that are needed to manage people.

I was able to identify training gaps in the areas of staff and volunteer oversight, task delegation and accountability, and conflict resolution both at the seminary level and for existing pastors. In addition, during my surveys and interviews, it became apparent that there exists a desire for financial training with respect to understanding the basics of budgeting, stewardship, and understanding statements. The goal of my project was to create training programs that addressed those gaps. It is my hope that these training programs and materials will act as a resource for new and existing pastors.

CHAPTER 2
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Statement

I am a Presbyterian Lay Pastor and CEO of a company. Because I bridge the secular and sacred, I have noticed that pastors struggle to handle the leadership demands that require them to be both dynamic and adaptable in the oversight of staff and volunteers, while balancing professional, pastoral, and gender specific relationships. This project will identify key training gaps in these areas and produce materials that can be used as training supplements for pastors.

The Covid-19 pandemic that began in early 2020, continues to impact our world and our calling as the Church even now in 2023. Our societal divisions seem to grow ever deeper as we struggle to make more permanent changes in the ways in which we reach out to our communities. And even though some sense of normalcy has returned to church life, new economic problems precipitated by inflation fears, looming global conflicts, and the continuing debate over the ever-changing nature of the Covid-19 virus, have fanned the flames of divisiveness within the church and society at large.

It has been my experience that when people are experiencing stress, they tend to swing between extremes. At times they withdraw, at other times they overreact. It is a leader's job to be able to moderate between these extremes and provide what Peter Steinke calls a "non-anxious presence."[21] But providing this type of non-anxious presence often takes both a certain amount of maturity and a lot of practice. Modeling ministerial leadership within a context of fear and division has heightened the stress that

[21] Peter L. Steinke, *Uproar: Calm Leadership in Anxious Times* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2019), 51.

pastors feel, leaving many pastors stressed to the point of burnout. When a leader is stressed to this point, the ability to self-regulate emotions and provide a sense of calm becomes even more challenging. Kyle Rohane's article in *Christianity Today* cited the following responses to this Barna Group Survey question, "Have you given serious consideration to quitting full-time ministry within the last year?"[22] Those individuals who responded "yes" rose from 29% in January 2021 to 38% in October 2021.[23] The issue of burnout, if left unaddressed, can leave pastors and their congregations devastated. Furthermore, younger pastors (those under the age of 45) are more likely to quit full-time ministry (46%) as compared to older pastors (34%).[24]

Ecclesiastes tells us that "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)[25] Many first-time solo pastors or head of staff pastors were not prepared for ministry in this shifting space. Part of their lack of preparedness lies in the world of post-Christendom, in which the church can no longer rely on the "state" or societal pressures to keep church a mainstay of life in America. And perhaps that is a good thing. Life as a Christian, and the desire to be involved in God's Kingdom, would seem to be more authentic if it is driven from the moving and prodding of the Spirit rather than from a perceived societal norm. If that holds true, the Church and those pastors providing leadership must then rely much more on persuasion than on mandate. This puts even more pressure on pastoral leadership which is already suffering

[22] Kyle Rohane, "Our Pulpits Are Full of Empty Preachers," *Christianity Today,* April, 2022, 47.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] All Biblical citations will be from NRSVUE unless otherwise indicated.

the pressure that arises within a ministry context and a world whose rate of change is accelerating.

In January 2022, Lifeway Research conducted a survey of American Protestant pastors to determine what they felt were their greatest needs. They are, in order of magnitude, as follows:

- **77% Developing leaders & volunteers**
- 76% Fostering connections with unchurched people
- 75% People's apathy or lack of commitment
- 72% Consistency in personal prayer
- 69% Friendship and fellowship with others
- 68% Consistency of Bible reading not related to sermon or teaching preparation
- **68% Training current leaders & volunteers**
- 66% Trusting God
- 64% Relationships with other pastors
- 64% Consistency taking a Sabbath[26]

These results confirmed what I have experienced and the anecdotal stories I had been told. And notice the two that are highlighted both concern people management, with the number one issue being the need (and perhaps lack of ability) to develop leaders and volunteers. And while discouragement and thoughts of leaving ministry are likely to occur sometime within the life of any pastor, all of the additional stressors seemingly revealed by the Covid-19 pandemic have brought these issues to the fore.

[26] Aaron Earls, "The Greatest Needs of Pastors," *Lifeway Research*, 11 January, 2022, https://research.lifeway.com/2022/01/11/u-s-pastors-identify-their-greatest-needs/.

Larger congregations have found their solution in the ability to hire more staff and in particular, executive pastors. These pastors often have training from outside of the ministry setting, many having completed an MBA degree and/or having worked in a leadership capacity that required the skills needed to hire, train, and oversee staff and volunteers.[27] Unfortunately, this solution is mainly the domain of much larger churches who have the budgets to afford to call a pastor for this position. But where does that leave the smaller churches that represent the majority of congregations across the United States?

In a survey conducted by Faith Communities Today in collaboration with the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, prior to the pandemic, there were increasing rates of decline in attendance prompting a growing number of smaller congregations.[28] Over the past twenty years, median church attendance has decreased from an average of 137 individuals to 65 individuals and the result has been an increase in the number of small congregations from 45% to 65%.[29]

I was also curious about the profile of a typical pastor entering the ministry. In a survey conducted in late 2000 by *CT Pastors*, the following attributes were noted:

- Two-thirds of pastors (67%) within this study had been raised by at least one Christian parent.
- 87% of pastors choose ministry because of a strong sense of call.

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[27] Deborah Ike, "How to Define the Executive Pastor Role," The Church Operations Toolkit, https://www.churchoperationstoolkit.com/define-executive-pastor-role/ (accessed May 24, 2022).

[28] Scott Thuma, "Twenty Years of Congregational Change: The 2020 Faith Communities Today Overview," *Faith Communities Today Summary Report* (2020), 11.

[29] Ibid.

- 66% of pastors choose to attend a seminary versus a Bible college as preparation.[30]

In that same survey, the top five things thought lacking in Seminary/Bible training were:

- 31% conflict management
- 24% business administration/management
- 12% leadership
- 7% spirituality
- 6% counseling[31]

Given that these statistics appear to indicate there are a growing number of smaller congregations with fewer resources, and that the training and development of leaders and volunteers (and I would add staff) is a top concern, I discovered that leadership training was lacking in the required curriculum at some of the larger seminaries.

Part of my curiosity was confirmed by a final assessment[32] of a candidate for ministry who had just graduated from Fuller Seminary with his Master of Divinity degree. During the interview, we discussed his internship at one of the larger churches in our Presbytery and he made a very telling comment. He stated that he felt that all of his classes prepared him for the theological and pastoral side of ministry but after watching and learning from the head pastor of this larger congregation, he felt very concerned about his own ability to manage the administrative side. I asked him if the topic of

[30] John Larue, "Profile of Today's Pastor," *CT Pastors*, October, 2000, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2000/october-online-only/cin01025.html (accessed June 1, 2022).

[31] Ibid.

[32] As part of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), when a candidate has completed all the required classes and internships, and passed all the ordination exams, the final step is for this candidate to present an exegetical paper and sermon to CPM to conduct a final assessment on the individual's readiness to accept a call to ordained ministry.

administrative leadership had ever come up as a general concern within his peer group. He responded that most, if not all, of his conversations with his peers at seminary revolved around the theological rather than the practical.

I delved deeper into this question about the availability of leadership training at seminary by conducting a preliminary review of the Master of Divinity curriculum of nine major theological seminaries: Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Harvard Divinity School, Luther Seminary, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, and Duke University Divinity School. And while this is hardly an exhaustive search, I found it interesting that not one of them required specific leadership courses in the skills needed to manage the administrative requirements that are part and parcel of the job of a pastor. Concordia University in Irvine, however, does offer a specialized degree in ministry leadership that spans from Bachelor's to Master's in a five-year period. I see this as an encouraging sign that the issue of offering leadership training as part of ministry training may be gaining attention.

I provided further support to my sense that this type of training has not been an essential part of the pastoral training process, by utilizing Survey Monkey[33] to send out a brief qualitative survey to 46 pastors that are registered within my Presbytery. I asked the following five questions about leadership training within the sphere of administration:

1. While in seminary, did you take any courses in how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

2. Did your internship provide you with this training?

[33] Survey Monkey is an online survey resource that allows participants to remain anonymous and quickly gathers data by answer category.

3. Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses, or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

4. Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? Check all that apply.

5. Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (See Appendix A, the proposal document, for a copy of the entire questionnaire)

I received 39 responses and the results were not surprising to me. 92% of the respondents had not taken any courses on managing staff and volunteers. Only 7 out of the 39 felt that the internships provided this type of training. 56% of those in ministry have taken additional courses to help them in this area but when asked where else they may have learned these skills, 77% answered "trial and error." On the final question about where they learned to manage conflict, the selection of the answer "trial and error" scored the highest at 64%. (See Appendix B within the project proposal document found in Appendix A for complete results and Appendix C within this same document for individual responses). As these results were coming in, I received several emails from respondents encouraging me in this work. Several examples were as follows:

- "I pray your voice is heard."
- "This is needed so I hope something helpful comes from this."
- "Very interesting work, please let me know how else I can help."

As I pondered all of this qualitative and quantitative data, I wondered why seminaries do not seem to view this type of training as an important component of the overall preparation for ministry. Is it possible that those who develop the curriculum for Master of Divinity training feel that the specific skills needed for proper administration of staff and volunteers is the purview of secular training? Is this an anachronism of past thinking around the skills needed to pastor a church? In Tod Bolsinger's book *Canoeing*

the Mountains, he comments on the skills in which he received training. He states, "When I went to seminary, we were trained in skills that were necessary for supporting faith in Christendom – teaching (for providing Christian Education), liturgics (for leading Christian services), and pastoral care (for offering Christian counsel and support)".[34] Unfortunately, Christian leaders were not trained or prepared for a world that is rapidly changing.[35]

It is no surprise that this type of training has long been advocated in business school, particularly in graduate courses. Late in the 20th century, there was a burst of interest in business leadership. Books, seminars, and classes offered competing ideas as to what qualities would make for a good leader and how to cultivate those qualities. Assuming all of what was written had value, then the outcome would be a better workplace, a stronger company, and unparalleled success. Steven Covey's book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* was first published in 1989, and became the go-to book for leaders. Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, wrote numerous books on leadership and his theories and case studies often held a prominent place in leadership classes. And of course, Jim Collins' book *Good to Great* is still a best seller to this day. All had bits of wisdom, all were fairly formulaic, but not all would or should transfer to leadership from a biblical perspective. Leadership principles for business are based on specific material outcomes and bottom-line profits. And if applied to ministry, the outcomes may be wildly successful but bereft of any true association to the Kingdom of

[34] Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing The Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 13.

[35] Ibid., 18.

God.[36] Just as business leaders often succumb to the "flavor of the week" in what makes a good leader and how to learn and exercise those skills, church leadership may be vulnerable to that same problem. And while many of these books tout the answer to the problem of stagnant growth or leadership failure, all run the risk of offerings solutions to churches that simply lack the resources for implementation.

To add more complexity to this are the sensitivities around managing gender differences. Both men and women tend to have slightly different styles of leadership. As stated in the introduction, women often need to overcome additional barriers in arenas that have long been dominated by men, and ministry is no exception. The Barna Group did a study in 2009 that showed that the ratio of women to men who are senior pastors within Protestant Churches was steadily increasing.[37] But sadly, women still face hurdles in church leadership - both in the perception of their right to lead and when that is not the barrier, their ability to be accepted and treated equally. In the book of Judges, we have the story of a woman judge named Deborah. Deborah is rather unique in that she is only one of a few women leaders who held prominence in the Bible. God chose Deborah to fulfill His purpose and she was a courageous leader at a time when women were seldom placed in leadership positions. As judge, Deborah served with strength, wisdom, and humility and thus was able to free the Israelites from the oppression of a cruel king. As a result, the land was at rest for forty years. (Judges 4-5) And yet even with examples like

[36] Russell L. Huizing, "Bringing Christ to the Table of Leadership: Moving Towards a Theology of Leadership," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 62.

[37] The Barna Group, "Research Releases in Leaders and Pastors," September, 2009, https://www.barna.com/research/number-of-female-senior-pastors-in-protestant-churches-doubles-in-past-decade/ (accessed May 19, 2022).

this, women are still subject to far more scrutiny in their call to leadership and ability to do the same than their male counterparts.

Both men and women face assumptions based upon gender biases. Women are more likely to be queried on their abilities with reference to work-life balance, particularly if the woman has children or may have children.[38] Men and women often have differing styles of communication, with women often using more tentative language which might transmit hesitancy or uncertainty. Conversely, in the world of the #MeToo movement, men must be made to be more aware of how both body language and the spoken word can communicate an offensive message to the opposite sex. However, in all my research to date, I have not found a resource that fully incorporates gender differences as it relates to the various administrative skills addressed above. And while it is true, at least with PCUSA, that boundary training[39] is required every three years, this is often seen as just another mandated activity without real benefit. With all of this in mind, we are still left with the question, "How do we determine what business theories might translate well in the world of ministry, taking gender issues into account and that specifically address the leadership demands of staff and volunteers and the complexities of the same?" I decided that a good place to start was to define what the word leadership conveys in both the secular and the sacred worlds.

[38] Amy Jackson, "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," *Christianity Today,* August 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/blessings-and-burdens-for-women-leaders.html (accessed April 20, 2022).

[39] Boundary training consists of both state-mandated sexual harassment and discrimination training combined with suggestions on how to maintain proper distinction between ministerial duties and personal time and space.

Definition of Leadership

There are several good definitions of leadership with respect to how a for-profit business might define it. I found the following definition from a summary in an article on leadership in the Harvard Business Review to be especially appropriate. It states: "Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants – a human and social achievement that stems from the leader's understanding of his or her fellow workers and the relationship of their individual goals to the group's aim."[40] Although this definition is in a secular context, it would also hold true in a sacred context. As stated in the previous chapter, my professor, Dr. Pitts, defines biblical leadership as "the art of influencing people to move from their agenda to God's agenda." In both of these definitions, the key point is people – a relationship with people that is developed to create an alignment of goals. Eric Law, in his book *Holy Currencies,* expands the word currency to include most facets of ministerial leadership including leading people and the graciousness and patience it takes to lead while maintaining Godly relationships.[41] All of these statements concerning leadership have validity but as leaders working for the building up of God's Kingdom, we need to hear what the Bible says about leadership.

The scriptures have many stories and examples of what biblical leadership should look like. And as I examined several of these, I was also mindful that the context of these examples cannot be ignored. Neither can we ignore the sweep of scripture that all points to our relationship with God and God's desire to be in relationship with us. Nor can we

[40] W.C.H. Prentice, "Understanding Leadership," *Harvard Business Review*, January, 2004, https://hbr.org/2004/01/understanding-leadership (accessed June 3, 2022).

[41] Eric H.F. Law, *Holy Currencies: 6 Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2013), 21.

ignore the impact that these reciprocal relationships can have on how we experience the stories in scripture. John Goldingay, in his book *Models of Interpretation of Scripture,* warns us that, "The notion of rule and hierarchy is essential to being human, but it is a rule that humanity as such exercises over the rest of creation, not a rule exercised by some human beings over others."[42]

I think it is important to ask ourselves if these various examples of biblical leadership point us in a direction such that a general theology of leadership can be developed? And can this theology of leadership be broken down into practical, teachable components so that an argument could be made that this should become part of the seminary curriculum or taught as an adjunct for additional pastoral training?

Additionally, is the lack of biblically founded leadership training hurting the pastoral competency of current and future pastors? Is it contributing to the stress and rates of burn-out previously discussed? I would argue that developing a theory of leadership that finds its grounding in scripture could act as a bridge between the secular aspects of leadership and the sacred. As pastor leaders, our leadership cannot be divorced from theology. To explore this question deeper, I turned to the Bible to see what scripture may say about leadership in general and, more specifically, what does the Bible say with respect to administrative oversight, delegation, and conflict resolution.

Biblical Examples of Leadership

At its heart, Christianity is about following Jesus, the author of our faith. Jesus' last command to his disciples was this:

> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in

[42] John Goldingay, *Models for the Interpretation of Scripture* (Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2004), 95.

> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit **20** and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

It is clear that we are to follow the teachings of Jesus and lead others to these same teachings. But the context within which we lead differs for each of us. Our communities, our cultures, societal changes, and pressures all impact the way in which we lead. Does that mean that there can never be a fixed model of Christian leadership that can be applied in all circumstances? Perhaps the answer is yes, but what must hold true is that all leadership training must be rooted in the central message of God's gracious love and mercy. Holding people accountable, learning to delegate, solving conflicts, and adapting to gender differences all must reflect the Christ-like manner in which we are called to lead. And because we are not merely called by Christ to be followers but we are also called to be leaders, our leadership becomes an expression of our faith. To help in that examination, we can turn back to the very origins of our faith found in the Old Testament scriptures. God's call to Abram (Abraham) found in Genesis was one of the first we hear:

> Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

As we follow Abraham's lineage, we see God's call to his progeny and finally, to Moses. In the first chapters of Exodus, we read about Moses' preparation in leadership due to his royal upbringing in the house of Pharoah. God was preparing Moses for what God would call Moses to do – deliver the nation of Israel from bondage and lead them on a life-altering journey.

Examples of the leadership selection and training process moved from generation to generation throughout the Old Testament stories, and into the New Testament and the establishment of the early church. In the book of Acts, we have numerous stories of the beginnings of the early church – these people of "The Way." As they began to coalesce as a group, several events, such as the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the selection of deacons, and the development of home churches became part of life. And because of their faithfulness and their willingness to follow the lead of the apostles, a rhythm of life began. And as the church grew, more organization and more leadership became necessary.

An example of the need for more leadership and the sharing of duties is found in the sixth chapter of Acts:

> Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. **2** And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3** Therefore, brothers and sisters, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, **4** while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." **5** What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.**6** They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them (Acts 6:1-6).

The New Testament has many scriptures passages like this one that we find in Acts - passages that directly relate to the work of administration in the church:

1. Administration does not have to be practical versus spiritual (2 Cor. 9:12-15).
2. Administration concerns the pastor's total task (Titus 1:5-9).
3. Administration is enhanced through scholarly study (2 Tim. 2:15).
4. Administration is an art as much as a skill and needs to be practiced (Jas 2:14-18).

5. Administration is more concerned with people over process (1 Cor.12:18-28).
6. Administration should act as a preserver of peace, rather than a producer of conflict (1 Cor. 8:7-13).[43]

Undergirding passages like these is the understanding that the work of God, the appropriate and proper leadership of God's people, will stand as a fulfillment of the work we are called to do.

As we read and understand scripture, we can find support for specific needs like delegation. The skill of delegation is often a challenge for those in ministry who may feel that it is just easier to do a task themselves rather than take the time necessary to teach another. And for smaller churches, it may be an issue of what task to delegate to whom and when. Or it may be that volunteers make up the bulk of those who can execute necessary tasks, and recruiting and managing those individuals may or may not require a different set of skills.

As referenced earlier, the story of Moses and the demands on his leadership skills provide a good foundation for the issues of training and delegation. Moses became quickly overwhelmed by the magnitude of leading this ragtag group of people called the Israelites. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, observed all the people coming to Moses to solve their problems and he (Jethro) recognized that this would exhaust Moses in short order. And so, a wonderful piece of leadership advice was given to Moses by his father-in-law, advice we should be mindful of even today. In Exodus, Jethro said this:

> Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God and bring their cases to God. **20** Teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. **21** You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set them as officers

[43] Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011), 4-5.

> over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. **22** Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. **23** If you do this and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their homes in peace" (Exodus 18:19-23).

Just in this short passage we can glean many salient facts about Godly leadership. While God calls us as leaders, God also expects us to function effectively and within that effectiveness are several important points:

- Leaders are not expected to do the entire job alone.
- Leaders who do attempt to go it alone risk burnout.
- God provides others as advisors to assist in leadership.
- Learning when and what to delegate can make the leadership job less onerous.
- Delegation does not remove responsibility of oversight from the leader.

It is clear from this one passage that God understands and provides for the practical needs of leading people. As previously mentioned, Acts 6:1-6 provides a good example of how the church solved the problem of too much work and not enough people. Notice that in this story of delegation, we have selection criteria – people of good standing, full of the Spirit, and wisdom. For pastor leaders, the selection criteria may differ but the point remains the same. You will be a more effective leader if and when you learn to select good staff and volunteers to assist you in the overwhelming work of ministry.

The same is true when it comes to conflict resolution. Conflict can bring out the best and/or the worst in people and leaders are no exception. If pastors have not received training in leadership, it is likely that they are not trained to deal with conflict when it arises. Whenever you are managing people, at some point or another, conflict will arise.

And while we may desire to avoid conflict completely, sometimes conflict can present opportunities for learning and growth for both parties. The ability to recognize the early warning signs, learn mitigation strategies, and have a willingness to know that it takes "two to tango" are all a part of conflict management and resolution. Unfortunately, we often introduce conflict into situations by the words we say and/or our lack of understanding of an existing cultural context. James speaks of the former in chapter three of his epistle:

> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.
> How great a forest is set ablaze by a such a small fire (James 3:5)!

And while the Bible is chock full of examples of conflict, I believe that Jesus, in His sermon on the mount found in the Gospel of Matthew, gives us a good piece of wisdom about dealing with conflict:

> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23-24).

Pastors, by the nature of their calling in Christ, are called to cultivate those under their care with compassion and grace. Furthermore, we are to treat each other with respect. I call this the "adult contract." Paul speaks to this in his letter from 1 Thessalonians:

> But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you;**13** esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Any proposed workbook, curriculum, or seminar targeted towards enhancing the skills of pastors must be supported by theology. However, care must be given in applying any of these biblical examples to a given context. Otherwise, just like with the "flavor of the

week" mentality that is pervasive in leadership books in business, we could also fall victim to utilizing scriptures whose context does not provide for a good application. Part of the challenge lies in learning how to apply a basic underlying scriptural claim to leadership while teasing out the appropriate sacred and secular examples.

Conclusion

While knowing what scripture says with respect to leadership, delegation, and conflict resolution, learning how to apply those concepts, including specificity of styles (gender differences) and translate them into practical and effective training materials, was my desired outcome. My training in business and in theology along with my experience within my church context as a leader, provided the starting point for my query. I first examined both secular and sacred writings on the specific administrative skills outlined above and drew from them what I believed was the "best of class." I interviewed executive pastors from differing faith traditions to determine what secular skills they used in their ministry positions and how they married the secular with the sacred. I sent out questionnaires to those recently graduated from seminary, selected several for interviews, and finally, conducted a focus group of experienced pastors to determine what and where they developed their administrative skills and what they felt would be helpful to people entering the ministry. The end goal of this information gathering was the creation of a guide and workshop series that I conducted and that now can be used for hands-on training, whether that be at the seminary level or post-graduate level, primarily targeting those entering ministry or who may be moving from a second-level position in ministry, such as youth ministry, to a head of staff position.

There is a real and demonstrated need for the practical training that was the focus of my project. It remains my fervent hope and prayer that God will use this work for the benefit of the Kingdom. And, I also hope that new pastors will recognize that and take the initiative to avail themselves of whatever extra training is needed to make their own ministry effective and fulfilling.

CHAPTER THREE
IMPEMENTATION
WHAT I PLANNED AND WHAT I ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED!

In reflecting back on what I planned to accomplish with this project, I realize now that I took on too much. Instead of taking a bite or two from the apple, I swallowed it whole and it almost choked me. As a business owner and as one attempting to teach others how to manage effectively, I should have known better but my excitement and enthusiasm outweighed my common sense. However, I did accomplish everything I put in my implementation plan. I just had to adjust the timing as each task took much more time and thought than I had ever imagined. With all that said, I suspect I learned more about this topic and more about myself then I ever expected, so in that regard it was worth it.

As I move through each portion of the project implementation, I will state what I originally planned to do, how that plan came together, the changes I made, and the results that both confirmed my thinking and, at times, surprised me. There were moments during the information gathering portions where I felt a bit frustrated as schedules would change at the last minute, forms were filled out incorrectly or not at all, and my Zoom recording platform had a few problems. Fortunately for me, the recording problem surfaced early so I used my phone as a backup recording device so I would not lose any important information. To be consistent with the implementation plan found in my proposal (Appendix A), I will begin this discussion with the identification of the first goal,

followed by my strategies for that goal, what I actually did, and the evaluation of the same.

Goals, Strategies, and Evaluations

Goal One

To identify training/knowledge gaps within recent seminary graduates from two to three mainline Protestant denominations in the areas of staff and volunteer administration with respect to hiring, delegation and accountability, and conflict management and resolution.

Strategy One

For goal one, what I said I would do and what I actually did remained the same with one exception which is addressed below. I created a questionnaire targeting recent seminary graduates from multiple denominations who were seeking pastoral positions or who had been recently hired into their first pastoral position. The questionnaire asked them to specify the type of theological training they received in seminary with regard to staff management, volunteer management, and conflict resolution. Crafting the questionnaire was relatively easy as I had already created a similar questionnaire in my project proposal. After several iterations of the questionnaire and feedback from my site team, I was ready to begin sending the questionnaire out.

Strategy Two

My second strategy for goal one was to deploy this questionnaire and review the data collected. I did not deviate from my original strategy but encountered unexpected difficulty. To deploy the questionnaire and gather the responses, I utilized the same platform as I had used in my proposal, Survey Monkey. This is a robust platform which

kept the responses anonymous, alerted me as questionnaires were completed, tabulated the data, and acted as an archive for each questionnaire completed. I was very familiar with this survey platform as I had utilized it before and I had participated in surveys that had utilized this platform. And this is where I encountered my first roadblock.

I had hoped that local seminaries would be willing to send this to their alumni if I agreed to share the information collected. I was wrong. I had no success in this area so I had to think outside of the box. As I pondered this dilemma, I wondered if the students I had shepherded through the PCUSA ordination process might be willing to complete the survey and share it with friends who had graduated. But I knew I needed to have more people than just those who attended Presbyterian seminaries. Fortunately, I learned how to network as part of my business skill set, so I set out to contact individuals that I knew who had completed their degrees. I began to have success as these individuals shared the survey link with others they had met at seminary and who were from a variety of denominations. One individual, who had attended Iliff Seminary (a primarily Methodist seminary), posted it on a shared alumni cohort site. This cohort site was small, approximately fifteen members, but those on the site also shared and the ball finally got rolling. I posted the questionnaire on the Fuller Alumni Facebook page as well as NYTS Alumni Facebook page but I had limited success with this strategy as posts on Facebook move quickly down from the opening screen as others post. I spent a fairly significant amount of time on this part, but was pleasantly surprised when I received forty-four responses.

The questionnaire consisted of ten questions (See Appendix B for a complete copy). The first three sets of questions were informational – name of seminary, year

graduated, degree completed, current occupation and years at the same, and gender (optional). The next five sets of questions were specific to leadership or workshop courses taken in management areas. Those questions, and the results, are listed below:

4. While in seminary, did you take any leadership courses or workshops on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, but they were not sufficient
- ☐ No

Results: 11.36% responded yes, 18.18% responded yes, but they were not sufficient, and 70.45% said no. This means that approximately **88% of graduates** have little to no training in managing staff and volunteers, which is a necessary skill for all of those entering the field of ministry, but especially so for first-time solo pastors.

5. Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

- ☐ Yes, and it was sufficient
- ☐ Yes, but it was not sufficient
- ☐ No

Results: 20.45% responded yes, 31.82% responded yes but they were not sufficient, and 47.73% said no. Combining the yes but not sufficient with no meant that approximately **80%** of graduates did not receive supplemental training in these same areas when they completed their field education.

6. Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses, or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

- ☐ Yes*
- ☐ No

*If you answered "Yes," please state the type of course or seminar and its subject matter.

Results: These results were not more encouraging as only 34.09% stated that they had sought out additional training, while **65.91%** had not.

7. **Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)**

    ☐ Workshops

    ☐ Additional educational courses

    ☐ Trial and error

    ☐ Other _____

    ☐ I have no staff or volunteers to manage in my current position

Results: These results aligned somewhat with the previous question as 30.23% stated they gained additional knowledge from workshops, 23.26% stated additional education, 30.23% stated other, and only 20.93% have no staff or volunteers to manage. Given that this question was "please check all that apply," it was not surprising to see that at some time or another, **74.42% used trial and error** in developing this skill. Unfortunately for those on the receiving end, trial and error can result in frustration and poor results.

8. **Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)**

    ☐ Workshops

    ☐ Additional educational courses

    ☐ Trial and error

    ☐ I don't manage these situations, or I try to avoid them

    ☐ I have no staff or volunteers to manage in my current position

Results: These responses were very similar in percentages to the previous with 32.56% indicating workshops, and 25.58% indicating additional education. I expected that the percentage who have no staff or volunteers to manage would have been the same as the previous question, but instead the percentage rose to 23.26%.[44] In the case of trial and error, the percentage rose to **81.49%,** and avoidance was 6.98%. Managing conflict appropriately and timely is a skill that takes time to master, but it is a critical skill to have, particularly when you are managing and pastoring the same group of people.

The last two questions were designed to gauge their interest in taking a workshop in these areas and if they would be willing to be interviewed. Out of my own curiosity in the areas of possible workshops I added "Understanding the basics of church finance."

9. I would be interested in attending seminars via Zoom or some similar platform in the following areas: (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Hiring, including job description development and interview techniques
- ☐ How to hold staff and volunteers accountable while maintaining pastoral authenticity
- ☐ When, how, and what to delegate
- ☐ Managing conflict between yourself and staff/volunteers and between others under your supervision
- ☐ Understanding the basics of church finances

Results: Thirty-five individuals indicated interest in one or more possible workshops. Within the area of staff and volunteer management, 34.29% selected hiring, including job description development and interviewing techniques, 74.29% holding people

[44] I have no explanation for this discrepancy other than the question was misread or answered hastily in either the first or second case.

accountable while maintaining pastoral authenticity, 51.43% how to delegate, 74.29% conflict management, and 65.71% understanding the basics of church finance.

The first four results were not surprising to me and validated my premise that administrative leadership training is lacking as part of the curriculum at seminaries. This leaves first-time clergy to their own devices to obtain this knowledge. What did surprise me was the high percentage of interest in understanding the basics of church finance. For this reason, I chose to add this as an additional workshop.

The last question asked was if they would be willing to be interviewed. Out of the 44 that responded to the questionnaire, 20 said yes, but only 17 provided me with contact information. I was able to schedule a sufficient quantity of interviews from this pool of respondents. (See Appendix C for a complete summary of the Monkey Survey responses.)

Strategy Three

My third strategy for goal one consisted of five follow-up interviews with those who took the questionnaire to see if I could dig a little deeper into their responses in order to assist me in the development of the workshops. I interviewed three men and two women, all relatively new in their ministry positions. (See Appendix D for a complete transcription of these interviews.) I have listed the questions and summarized the most relevant responses below:

1) Can you give me an overview of your daily, weekly, and monthly leadership responsibilities?

The respondents held differing positions - three solo head of staff, one associate pastor, and one resident parish pastor working under an associate pastor. Because of this, their answers varied somewhat. What surprised me was that all three of the solo pastors

were either first or second call with limited experience supervising others. When I queried those three about how prepared they felt in the area of supervision, only one of the three felt prepared as he had been an associate pastor. The other two learned on the fly, so to speak.

As a follow up for all five, I asked if they had a written job description and job descriptions for their staff and volunteers. Two said yes, they had one and they had them for staff, but were not clear if the volunteer leaders had job descriptions. Having heard this from others I interviewed throughout this process, I made sure to include a section on job descriptions for volunteers as well as a recruitment form.

2) On the questionnaire, on one of the questions, "Where have you learned to manage staff/volunteers and conflict management?," you indicated trial and error and talking to colleagues. Can you tell me more about what has worked and not worked for you in these areas?

Those that had responsibility for managing staff and thus having to deal with conflict had no formal training in this area. One utilized a mentor, but the others just learned by trial and error. One comment from Pastor Interview #4 was quite telling:

> Yeah, I would say that there was a fairly steep learning curve coming into my position in terms of working with, especially working with volunteers. I am extremely overeducated. I have a, in addition to my MDiv, I have a PhD in Pastoral Care and Counseling and was never trained or took a class on volunteer or conflict management now, I think about it. And, and therefore, yeah, pretty much, on the ground kind of learned, you know, how, how to run meetings, how to manage, you know, conflicts so that folks are, feel heard and appreciated even when they're on kind of opposing sides, of, of whatever point we happen to be discussing that type of thing.

And another, from Pastor Interview #5 backed up that same point:

> Yeah, I mean, I think that some of it is just, this might be true of, of any denomination, but I feel like the identity of the pastor is just taught in sort of an outdated model. And, and so like for me, I didn't receive any training there, there was no class about administration and by administration, I don't just mean finance, like how to be an effective head of staff, right?

Both of these pastors indicated a lack of personnel management and training across a variety of areas. I would never argue that in-depth learning about the scriptures, the history of the church, theology, and pastoral care are not important, even essential, but the component of teaching the practicalities of leading a church is definitely missing.

3) You indicated you were interested in seminars on managing staff/volunteer accountability, managing conflict, and the basics of church finance. Is there anything specific within these three areas that you would like to see emphasized?

These questions varied somewhat based on the areas of interest indicated, but three of the four all indicated these three areas, and one indicated hiring and interviewing strategies.

As previously stated in the discussion on the questionnaire results and in discussion with these interviewees, it was very clear to me that they all desired to have a clearer grasp of church finances. Interviewee #5 said this:

> So, I think that there's when it comes like, I think it'd be easy for a pastor to say like, administration tasks is, is an area where they want to improve. But like, that's an area that like, I've had to really sort of figure out. But I think that one of the areas that is one that I, I saw a massive gap in my seminary formation was just church finance awareness and training.

This reinforced my desire to offer this additional workshop in the basics of church finance and as I developed that module, I gave a high-level overview of the same.

4) What do you wish you had as more experience or learning prior to becoming a pastor?

Given I promised to keep the interview to 30 minutes, I was only able to solicit this question from two people but both felt that some training in the daily administrative tasks would have been very helpful for them in their call, whether it was solo/head of staff or associate. Pastor Interviewee #2 said this:

> That's a good question. I don't know. I mean, maybe it's just now it's on my mind, but I think some of organizational management kind of things and the, the mystery of how you structure committees well, so that people don't just feel like their time is being wasted, but so you actually can get stuff done. And I think a lot of that is, is just puzzling and is the sort of thing that I know there are people who do that professionally and have that be their primary area. But I think in seminary, we can kind of focus on what it means to be a worship leader and a pastoral counselor and those kinds of things while, we maybe avoid some of the, you know, "running an organization and managing people aspect of it."

This statement rang very true for me as I have witnessed just how much time pastors can spend in the area of administration and I understand why they become frustrated and feel challenged within these areas of administrative responsibilities.

5) As you think theologically, are there specific biblical examples of leadership that you draw from and can you share them with me and tell my how they help you in your position?

All had different but interesting responses to this last question. One spoke about Jonah and being open to God's call even if it isn't what you desired for yourself. One spoke about how the disciples just "bumbled along" but Jesus remained loving and kept teaching. Another spoke about the joy of loving others as found in 1 Thessalonians. One of the women talked about the story of Esther and how inspiring and encouraging she found Esther's story. The final comment came out of the last interview I conducted and I felt this comment was compelling and spoke to the inclusive nature of God's love for humanity:

> So, there's a model, and it, it comes from an image that Jesus used, but I have a, a painting in my office, on my wall. So, it's the first thing that I see when I walk into my office, but it's also placed so, it's the first thing anyone who meets with me sees when they come in my office. It's a picture of a, a table, a dining room table with a whole bunch of mismatched, random chairs around it and says "There is a place for you." So very similar to like the great banquet language.

All five relaxed when I asked them a theological question. Perhaps it was because it was familiar territory for them and they were happy to have a question asked of them that they felt capable of answering with ease.

I was encouraged by the enthusiasm of these new ministers, but concerned that, without sufficient and practical training in the administrative areas, they may find ministry losing its luster. This only increased my desire to make sure my workshops added value with good examples, case studies, and biblical advice.

Evaluation of Goal One Outcomes

The evaluation of success was determined by the return rate of those completing the questionnaire. While I had no way of quantifying the response rate within Facebook, the response rate within my personal networking approach exceeded 25%. Given I received forty-four responses, and the responses correlated to my previous research into course offerings as stated in my project proposal as well as my anecdotal information from a variety of pastors I know, I felt the return rate was sufficient for my purpose.

Goal Two

To determine which models of leadership, with respect to both the secular and the sacred, have provided the most assistance in the area of administrative pastoral leadership. Additionally, I wanted to discover where pastors learned their skills and how they had adapted them to the sacred environment of church.

Strategy One

My first strategy for goal two was to create an interview template and interview two to three Executive Pastors[45] to determine what skills they brought with them from

[45] Most Executive Pastors are tasked with the administration of the staff to free up the Senior Pastor to focus on worship and pastoral care.

their secular training, if they had any, and how they adapted that training to enhance their pastoral leadership role. I was also curious about any issues around perceived gender styles so I asked them if gender differences helped or hurt their abilities.

I worked on the interview questions with the help of my site team. It took three iterations of these questions before I felt I was asking the correct questions. (See Appendix E for a complete copy of the interview questions) As it turned out, I interviewed four people – two men and two women. All four people held or had held the title of Executive Pastor. One was from a local Baptist church, one from a local PCUSA church, one from a large split-off of a non-denominational church, and one from a huge and renowned non-denominational church. Everyone was asked the same questions, but the follow-up questions asked were dependent on their individual responses. I utilized a Zoom platform so that I could record the conversations which allowed me to pay close attention to what they were saying and ask follow-up questions where appropriate.

Some of the answers were very similar and not surprising. It was the dissimilarities in their answers that intrigued me. I have captured a brief summary of the similarities and dissimilarities below and why I found them interesting. (See Appendix F for a complete transcription of these interviews)

One of the first questions was about their theological training and here was the first surprise. Both men had seminary degrees (MDiv), but both women did not have any formal theological training. Surprisingly, the women expressed a depth of knowledge and application of scripture similar to the men, and both stated that they had learned this scriptural knowledge over the course of their time in ministry. Both of the women had worked in secular fields prior to church ministry, but only one of the men had held a

secular job. Yet all expressed a strong sense of call to ministry and trusted that God would give them what they needed to be successful.

When I asked about defining the term "Executive Pastor," I had expected all to have a similar working definition, given that all worked in good-sized churches. Each one had a slightly different take on this so I have included some direct quotes about what that term means to them.

- "Everything the lead pastor doesn't want to do."
- "Implement the vision of the senior pastor…through the management and development of our staff and department heads."
- "…the ability to manage, lead, and direct ministries in a variety of ways which is not limited to finance, people management, visioning, and vision implementation."
- "… being a shepherd leader, one who has the business acumen and administrative gifts equally balanced with the shepherd and disciple maker."

And only one of these individuals had formal training in administration via his Master of Business Administration degree. All of the rest learned their administrative skills via on-the-job training – both in secular jobs and ministry.

I asked each of them to describe their daily, weekly, and monthly tasks as it related to administration. There was much similarity in this area with each having direct reports. Given that, I asked how they managed their interactions with their direct reports, i.e., how do they hold their direct reports accountable for their work product vis-à-vis their job description, and when and how do they conduct meetings. All of them stated that they held weekly or bi-monthly meetings with their direct reports, but only one of the

four utilized any type of formal agenda. The one individual who had been part of a mega-church did state that she utilized a journal to keep track of what was said and commitments made in these meetings. All of them had job descriptions for themselves and their direct reports, but only several had written individual goals for themselves and their direct reports. Again, a surprising revelation given the size of the churches. I would have expected to see a more organized, structured approach versus a seemingly ad hoc approach with respect to goal setting.

I followed this up with questions about holding staff accountable when they failed to meet the expectations set for them. The women were much more prayerful and, I would say, gentle in their approach when faced with instances of failure. This aligned with my research in the area of gender and its impact on the differing leadership styles between men and women. And as my research indicated and as I have experienced, the men expressed a more direct, get-down-to-business approach. While none of this surprised me as my research on gender differences supported these two approaches, I felt a sense of disappointment that the women did not seem to feel comfortable asserting themselves in their ministry contexts.

In the area of staff management, all four expressed that handling human resource (HR) issues was the least desirable area for them. All of them utilized either outside HR consultants, specific HR personnel, or made sure that they and their senior staff took HR workshops annually to keep pace with the challenging laws with respect to personnel. None of them had, what they felt, was an expertise or talent for the range of HR issues that can arise within any organization. They did express that managing these aspects

while maintaining their pastoral relationships was challenging and preferred not to do more than absolutely necessary in this area.

As I moved on to the question of conflict management with staff and volunteers, all four referenced biblical passages as an example for managing conflict. For example, Matthew 18 and Colossians 3 were mentioned. All four spoke about having an attitude of love, and not letting problems fester. Interviewee #1 was both wise and direct in the response to this question:

> The nature of the church is, it is difficult for us to kind of we, we expect that everybody will just get along and that it will all be okay and it'll work. And so, when that doesn't happen, we experience these dichotomies of thought and cognitive dissonance because we're trying to figure out what do I do because I, I love the individual - I don't necessarily love their work product.

I believe this is very true and because of this, new pastors are often surprised when everybody doesn't hold the same work ethic or are difficult to manage.

I asked them if they handled conflict with volunteers differently than staff and their responses varied. One felt it was easier to manage staff as they are paid to do a certain set of tasks versus volunteers. Two felt that managing volunteers and staff was not that different. One of the men stated that they were direct in their response to conflict irrespective of it being staff or volunteers. Interviewee #3 said this in response to that question:

> Gosh, that's a great question. And I've heard it often said that they are because they're paid and whereas volunteers are not. And I think that's a misnomer. I think that it's about trust and buy-in and that if you can establish that it doesn't matter. I mean, if you ultimately, when you think about it, the whole mission of the Kingdom is a volunteer basis, so being able to get that, that buy-in and manage and steward it well and should be able to overcome that perception.

The last question I wanted to examine was about bridging the secular with the sacred/covenantal aspects of being a boss and their pastor. Three out of the four responses were similar – lots of prayer, clear job descriptions, processes, and/or responsibilities, and maintaining an attitude of reverence. One pastor in this group mentioned the difficulty of straddling the necessary HR laws and requirements with the fact that you are doing work for the Kingdom of God. This person described it as a "constant tension" between the secular and the sacred. Because I found this statement to be so insightful, I spoke to the balancing of the sacred or covenantal aspects of being a pastor with the secular aspects of being a boss both in the introduction to the entire written guide provided for the workshops and again, as part of my conflict management and resolution training workshop. Additionally, I spent many hours researching biblical leadership and what a theology of leadership might look like which, in my opinion, was what they were describing without using that particular terminology.

In keeping with my research on gender, one of the male pastors was much more matter-of-fact in their approach to conflict and stated the Church is a business and business is business. Don't have your friends inside of the church (my paraphrase). But this same pastor was adamant that the church belongs to God and everything in the church belongs to God ergo avoiding conflict was really doing a disservice to his vocational call.

And as a follow-up to this question, I asked if they could offer any advice to a first-time pastor about bridging the secular and sacred and what would it be. All but one responded without hesitation stating, "Get a mentor." This mentor should have experience with both business and being a pastor so you may need two different people,

but get someone you trust, someone that can speak the truth to you, and someone that can be praying for you. Excellent advice in my humble opinion.

I found all of the interviews valuable as I definitely took much of their advice and wove it into my workshops. But one final quote that validated my work came from Interviewee #1 as part of advice to a new pastor and in reference to what is taught in seminary:

> That we learned how to conjugate verbs and we learned how to parse things, but we did not necessarily learn how to administrate and run churches. And if it's not important to you, you won't learn the skill or you won't invest the time.

As I close this discussion on the Executive Pastor interviews, I want to share an interesting observation which was made by the individual who transcribed these interviews. She noted that I was much firmer in my probing with the men and much more collegial with the women. As I thought about this, I realized it was most likely because in my role as a female CEO in the field of contracting, I deal primarily with men. It took years of standing up for myself and pushing back against a female stereotype to gain the proper recognition of my abilities. This instinctually presented itself when I encountered what I thought was resistance to answering my questions. The women, on the other hand, were very forthcoming with their answers and excited to be both asked and listened to. The mere fact that they felt flattered to be included in the Executive Pastor interview group spoke volumes to me about how women allow themselves to be held hostage by existing perceived stereotypes.

Strategy Two

My second strategy for goal two was to conduct a focus group by inviting five to seven long-term Senior Pastors who have not had what I termed as “executive pastor”

type training to determine if and where they learned these needed skills, and which ones have been the most helpful. I included several questions on gender differences to determine areas that have been helpful and harmful in their interactions. To develop the questions, I enlisted the help of two of my site team members, one who was experienced in an academic setting for focus groups, and one who owns a strategic marketing firm that executes focus groups for their secular clients. Surprisingly, it took six iterations of the questions before both of these people felt that I had good questions (See Appendix G) complete copy of the questions).

I was able to recruit five people to participate in the focus group. The recruitment of pastors from various denominations was not too difficult, but trying to find a day and time that would work for all of them was challenging. However, we finally settled on a date and time. The group consisted of three men and two women. From this group, I had two Presbyterians from different areas, a Congregationalist, a Lutheran, and a Baptist. I utilized the Zoom platform and had my editor act as my second set of eyes and ears as well as monitoring the recording, chat, and polling functions.

On the day of the focus group, although all five pastors had confirmed, one was a no show. I was concerned that four people would not be enough to solicit an engaging conversation, but that was not the case. I opened with prayer, introduced myself and my editor, read the ground rules, and began the focus group. The lack of the fifth person was not an issue as it allowed for more individuals to speak to the questions I asked. I did have to prompt several times, “I would like to hear someone else’s experience,” but otherwise, the conversation flowed freely.

The first question asked was whether or not they had a formal process for interviewing for staff positions and, if yes, where had they learned it and how did they utilize it. The responses varied, but with one exception the common thread was that they utilized a job description but counted on someone in their church having an expertise in the area. Only one of the four, Focus Group Member #3 (FGM), had a more formalized process and that was part of a previous job experience. FGM #3 said this:

> And I'd say most of that stuff comes out of my business background before coming to the church, I had an HR, a Marketing degree, and some of my old classes come back to mind when we develop these processes and then once and then once we make the hire, there's the paper trail that has to be done. Job description, personnel, handbook has to be, they have to be given that check a box that that's happened. All the 1099 stuff has to happen and then what we do to onboard them in terms of is fairly systematic.

In speaking to the group about this, it appears that most of what they know, they have learned over time via trial and error.

The second question was similar to the first. I asked them how they recruited and trained their volunteers. All of them responded that they had no real process per se, and it was a difficult part of ministry. As a follow up to their responses, I asked what was the most challenging aspect of volunteer recruitment. The group seemed reluctant to answer, but FGM #1 and FGM #2 both spoke about the pool of people available who have the time and willingness to be trained. This aligns with my research about the decline in volunteerism within churches, particularly since the pandemic.

The third question was around accountability. I asked how they determine if and when their staff and volunteers are completing their duties on time and accurately. FGM#3 jumped in and spoke about having a very formalized process for paid staff, i.e., annual reviews, but that it was more difficult with volunteers. FMG #3 had this to say:

> With the volunteers, it's a little more difficult because there's nothing formalized there and there's, there's no motivation with a paycheck to do that. But I think it's at least in our case, it's, it's making sure that the people who are volunteering, feel supported in what they're doing. So that, that you're invested, you know, if you, if you can show that you're invested in them as the pastors and the staff and are behind them, it gives you a little more room to address, you know, where we're headed and how we get there.

FGM #1 then followed up with similar information about paid staff but added a mid-year review and agreed with FGM #3 that it is more difficult to hold volunteers accountable. FGM #1 had found success by holding an annual thank you luncheon and combined it with a sharing of best practices in their specific area of volunteerism within the church.

The next question was deliberately broad and moved the focus off of staff/volunteers and onto their own personal definition of success in ministry. All four felt that it was a difficult and subjective question and thus hard to answer. But when they answered, they all had very similar responses. They felt that those measuring their performance used objective criteria like attendance, growth in numbers, and giving, but they felt it should be so much more than that. FGM #1 shared an experience at a conference led by Ralph Douglas West. FGM #1 said this:

> …one of the things that I took away from there with the gathering of pastors is that we can no longer just look at what they deemed as bodies, budgets, and buildings. You know, we have to look beyond that and our measurables need to be in ministry and mission and momentum. What is the momentum of your church and how you're growing people from the inside out?

I found this response to be especially relevant in the time in which we live. Particularly given the pressure pastor-leaders find themselves under as church attendance is in decline.

I moved on to the next topic of balancing their role as a pastor with their role as a boss, with both paid staff and with volunteers. Those who spoke agreed this is very hard

but that they try to treat everyone equally, including their volunteers. The three that spoke agreed that when they have to correct or discipline someone and that person is a church member, it often leads to hard feelings and some choose to leave the church. As I fully agreed with their opinions, I made sure to speak to this in almost every workshop I conducted.

At this point in the process, I felt that they were a bit fatigued so I switched up the order of questions and asked them how they kept their leadership skills sharpened. All four answered briefly, and all four responded that they either have a coach or a mentor from outside of the church. Two of the four mentioned reading leadership books and seeking advice from members with secular experience.

The next set of questions revolved around gender stereotyping and related discrimination. I was surprised by some of their responses. While the women shared some stories about stereotypes as it related to being a female minister, the conversation quickly turned to the stereotype of ageism. FGM#1 spoke clearly about this saying:

> So, I think I've been discriminated against in the pastoral position due to my age. The first church I was blessed to pastor, I came into that congregation, congregational context at the age of 28 going on 29. And everyone there, they were old enough to be my parents. And so, one, they chose me because of youth. But they thought because of pastoral inexperience that they could sort of rule me or, you know, do things, that, that were just, it's just wrong. One leader, I'll just leave it at that, came to me and said the words,“You're hardheaded,” and “If you are my son, you know, you would not get away with this.” And I'm like, "Listen, I didn't come to be your son. I came to be your pastor.” And so, I had to really deal with a whole lot of things in that regard.

I had not expected or anticipated this, but I went with it and found it relevant. Because of this, I spoke about this in my workshop on hiring and interviewing as well as conflict resolution, i.e., how stereotypes or biases can negatively impact decision-making.

Interestingly, but not unexpectedly, the two women dominated the responses on this question and related questions about gender discrimination.

The last discussion question asked how they handled conflict with staff and volunteers. All four answered about managing and resolving conflict with staff and utilizing job descriptions and their personnel manual as a starting point. FGM #3 spoke at length about having regular meetings with staff and establishing clear lines of authority. FGM #2 spoke about avoiding getting "triangulated" into conflict between staff members. Only two of the group spoke briefly about conflicts with volunteers and that was focused more on staff having conflict with a volunteer versus they, as the pastor-leader, having a conflict with a volunteer. Both felt a gentler approach was needed, but neither felt you should ignore it.

The last question is stated below and was formed as a polling question within Zoom:

> Please rank the following four areas in importance for solo pastor/ head of staff as it relates to knowledge and training for staff and volunteer leaders.
>
> - Interviewing, hiring, and training
>   - One rated as most important, one rated as third, and two rated as fourth.
> - Delegating tasks and accountability follow up
>   - Three rated as most important and one rated as third most important.
> - Conflict management and resolution
>   - Three rated as second most important and one rated as fourth.
> - Understanding the basics of church finance
>   - One rated as second most important, and two rated as third; one failed to answer.

All in all, I felt that this experience, from crafting the questions to recruiting and holding the focus group was valuable both from the content of their answers as previously referenced but also for the experience. (See Appendix H for a complete transcription of the Focus Group event.)

Strategy Three

My third strategy for goal two was scheduling and conducting the interviews and Focus Group which is reflected in the previous discussions.

Evaluation of Goal Two Outcomes

Compare and contrast the information gathered in strategies one and two to determine where they do, and do not, align. This information proved to be very helpful in preparing the workshop training materials.

Interestingly enough, I found that all those interviewed, including those in the focus group, were like-minded when it came to the importance of learning the necessary administrative skills before one is expected to be held responsible for knowing them. The executive pastors expressed more concern about the lack of education and mastery of these skills for new pastors versus the senior pastors in the Focus Group. But all agreed that having training in the administrative tasks, tasks that pastors are expected to know and master as part of their job, would be a huge benefit as well as saving so much time and mistakes along the way.

The one piece that surprised me, and it was across all the different groups, was the strong desire for training on the basics of church finance including understanding statements, budgets, and suggestions on stewardship. As previously stated, given this strong alignment, I added this module to the three I had already planned.

Goal Three

From the information gathered in goals one and two, I created a series of workshop materials that addressed hiring, delegation, and accountability between a pastor and his/her staff and volunteers, and conflict resolution within the same set. As previously stated, I added a fourth workshop on the basics of church finance. Within each workshop, when appropriate, were segments that addressed the differences between paid staff and volunteers, and the gender nuances that can both enhance and impede success in these areas of pastoral leadership.

Strategy One

My first strategy for goal three was to develop, schedule, and conduct the first two workshops focusing on hiring, delegation, and accountability for new pastors or new heads of staff. The workshops included components that addressed paid staff versus volunteer staff and the gender nuances that can impede or improve tactics and objectives in hiring, delegating, and holding people accountable.

The first step was determining how I would disseminate the workshop availability, not just for these first two but for the other two that would follow. I needed to be able to have an easy platform to handle sign-ups, disseminate information and zoom links, as well as allow for follow-up. After some consultation, I decided to utilize a website called Signup Genius. This site allowed all four modules, including their dates and times, to be displayed in one section thereby making it easy for an individual to sign up for as many workshop modules as they desired. This website alerted me via email each time a person would sign up for a workshop or had a question, and was a convenient way to see and store all the data.

I launched the sign-ups for all four workshops three weeks before the first workshop. I initially sent the sign-up link to those who had indicated an interest but surprisingly, I received only a few sign-ups. I reached out to the same group of people that I had contacted for my questionnaire and asked them to post the description and the sign-up link on several FB sites. In addition, I reached out to all of those I had interviewed and asked them to share the link. My Presbytery published the information in our E-news blast that is sent out bi-weekly. The Executive Presbyter of our Presbytery also shared the information with other Presbyteries. Thanks to these efforts, by the time I sent out the first reminder and zoom link, I had 30 sign-ups for the first workshop.

Given I had written the first and second guides for the first two workshops prior to giving those workshops, I decided that I would need two workshops to cover what I thought I could cover in one. I separated the workshop about hiring from the workshop on delegation and accountability. This turned out to be the absolute correct strategy as the first two workshops went right up to the two-hour allotted time limit.

The first workshop focused on the development of job descriptions, interviewing strategies, and keys to success. Included in this workshop was a lengthy discussion about the nature of the sacred relationships inside of a church and how they differ from secular employment relationships. This was a product of my theological research question and I brought in many of the same biblical examples discussed in my research. I felt that this topic was crucial and so I briefly spoke about it at the beginning of each workshop.

Using information from my written guide, I created a PowerPoint presentation for the first workshop Module and conducted that workshop on July 27, 2023, from 10:00a.m. to 12:00a.m. PDT. Out of the 30 who signed up, 14 attended. Admittedly, I

was disappointed with only a 47% turnout, but I knew that workshops and webinars that are free are easier to miss as you have no real investment.

In the first half of the workshop, I went into depth discussing the importance for a pastor at a new church to take the time to read all of the existing job descriptions (including any for volunteer leaders) as a means of understanding the established structure and hierarchy within that church. We discussed how to create or revise a job description based on what I termed the "basics" and the "essentials.

The second half of the workshop was a discussion on interviewing strategies and, once the hire is made, how to on-board a new employee or volunteer to increase their chances of success. We finished up with a brief discussion on conducting one-to-ones[46].

I felt that the first workshop went smoothly and I had 14 surveys returned – with good scores. One very interesting piece of feedback I received from the first module was about a comment I made concerning watching body language during the interviewing process. My comment focused both on your own body language as well as your perspective employee. The survey respondent comment was this:

> This was such a strong and well-thought-out training. I am so grateful to participate in it! It's so clear how much thought and intention went into this. Two minor comments: 1. There was a short interlude where the presenter discussed body language/interview behavior. I found this to be quite biased against neurodivergent folks, introverts, and folks with invisible disabilities. The suggestions about what certain body postures and behaviors signified lacked nuance for me. I feel the presentation could be enhanced with a few statements about inclusive interviewing practices. 2. I really appreciated the multi-tasking exercise; it really drove home such an important point. However, I found the instruction-giving a little off-putting. I felt talked to like a child. This could definitely be preference, and I recognize others might not feel this way. Overall, this was such a positive experience.

[46] The term one-to-one is a reference to a regularly scheduled meeting between a staff member or volunteer and the pastor-leader.

I found this comment to be very insightful and personally helpful so I addressed it at the beginning of the second module. I also modified the first and third modules to include this information.

The second workshop module was on delegation and accountability. I personally enjoyed writing the guide and preparing the PowerPoint for this workshop because I felt I was able to integrate both my research and my personal experience into the content. I had 30 sign-ups for this module and 15 attended.

As with each module, I began with an example from the Bible (in this case pertaining to delegation and accountability) and spent the remainder of the first half discussing the "when, what, and how" of delegation with both paid staff and volunteers. There was less interaction in the first half, but when we moved to accountability, the interaction increased.

The second half on accountability included a lengthy discussion with examples on course corrections including giving feedback, progressive discipline steps, and termination. I created a case study for this portion about handling deflection within these types of conversations, whether or not it was a paid staff member or a volunteer. My editor and myself role-played this portion as no one in the group was willing to try to be the one deflecting or the supervisor stopping the deflection. If I was to offer this workshop again, I would consider pre-recording the role play and watching it as a video with an opportunity to discuss. I also included a case study on how to terminate a staff member and again, my editor and myself showed the group what this could look and sound like.

With this second workshop, I found that I was more relaxed and, based on feedback from the first workshop, I gave more time for interaction, so I was dismayed when my survey scores were lower than the first module scores. When I discussed this with my editor, who was also my co-host and moderator, she reminded me that I put a great emphasis on scoring for an employee review in this module. I indicated to the participants that most of the time, review scores should be a three and that a three was not an indicator of "C" work as the scores are not grades. Oh the irony that I failed to recognize that same point when I reviewed my scores for the second module. Again, one comment attached to the survey was outstanding, and again caused me to do some rewrites. The comment is captured below:

> The first module was amazing. For me, the second was good. But I think it is mainly because some of the topics (e.g. delegation) seemed remedial, but you brought new ideas to all of the topics. I deeply appreciated the termination segment, but after hanging up the call, I realized that we didn't acknowledge the dynamics of termination in a church. I wish we would have addressed termination of a staff member who is also a church member.

In the first module we discussed the pros and cons of having church members as paid staff, but I failed to talk about the impact of that decision in the termination portion of this workshop presentation. I went back and added this to the guide for the second module and addressed it at the beginning of the third workshop as well as adding it as a case study for the third workshop.

Strategy Two

My second strategy for goal three was to schedule and conduct two workshops focusing on conflict resolution for new pastors and/or new heads of staff. The workshops had two components – paid staff versus volunteer staff and the gender nuances that can impede or improve conflict resolution.

I originally planned to conduct this workshop twice, as I hoped to reach new worshipping communities or new church plants that may or may not yet have been chartered as a church. But after thinking about this, I felt that if there were those who would attend the workshop and belonged to one of these communities, they would benefit from the discussions and questions posed by those from established churches. And given that I added a workshop module on church finances, I decided to conduct only one workshop in conflict management and resolution.

For the third workshop, I had 30 sign-ups and 15 people attended. This was the most difficult module of the four to present as I expected that this would be a sensitive area to discuss. As far as writing the guide and preparing the PowerPoint, this workshop took the longest for me. It took me the same length of time to write this third guide as it did to write the first two. I had to really spend time thinking it out, outlining the written guide, and double checking my sources. I wanted to be thorough and practical, yet I knew I could not teach this topic in two hours and expect mastery of this area. The other complexity was the nature of handling conflict within the sacredness of a church. As with each of my guides, I made sure I utilized all of my previous research conducted for the three research questions, and embedded much of that information into this workshop.

I focused the first half of the workshop on many areas that contribute to situations of conflict, i.e., biases, backgrounds, and physiology. When I discussed bias and how that can impact our reactions and actions when faced with conflict, I wanted to know what areas of biases they had experienced. I discussed generational, gender, and cultural. Interestingly, the group added educational attainment, race, marital status, family size, politics, and disabilities. This was an eye-opening discussion and I could tell from their

questions and input that they were very engaged in understanding the underlying factors that contribute to conflict.

In the second half of the workshop, I walked them through practical steps of how to address conflict situations between themselves and other staff and/or volunteer leaders, as well as when they must mediate conflict between two staff members or volunteers. I provided two different types of case studies for practice and I felt they were very engaged based on the probing and thoughtful questions I received. Because I had received a comment from the second module about terminating a long-time employee who was also a congregational member or who had a friend as a volunteer leader, I used that as our second case study. Again, we worked through the possible steps and how they might anticipate and mitigate conflict by utilizing the information we had previously discussed.

In summary, I felt that the time I spent in preparation paid off in an informative workshop that was as helpful to me as it was for the group. I was, however, left somewhat perplexed by one comment:

> I would have appreciated more conversations regarding dealing with staff conflicts, specifically how/when to bring other leaders (personnel elders, for example) into the conversation. I would also have appreciated a bit more conversation around what to do if the staff member is not willing to engage in these conversations to begin with.

I felt that we did address this in the question-and-answer period and was fairly clear that while you cannot force paid staff to participate in conflict resolution, given that they are paid staff, you would likely have to move to a more disciplinary approach not unlike what we discussed in the second workshop.

The fourth and final workshop module was on the basics of church finance.

I had 30 sign-ups for this workshop and 12 attended. In the first half of this workshop, I incorporated both the biblical aspects of managing money with the straightforward, secular aspects of the same. I briefly covered taxation within a church along with possible issues, and gave a brief explanation of fund accounting, balance sheets, and income statements.

The second half was a discussion about the budget cycle, the various types of budgeting models, and how to construct a budget. I offered a lengthy discussion on the importance of financial controls and closed with a brief discussion of stewardship.

Given that I have two academic degrees in finance and operations, have been deeply involved in my home church finances as Treasurer, and my 40 plus years in business, this workshop was definitely easy for me to both write and conduct, that is until I encountered a technical glitch that almost derailed this workshop.

I deliberately chose to conduct all four workshops using a conference room at my business as it was quiet and I knew we had a very stable internet connection. The first three had no technical issues, but about ten minutes into this workshop, I lost my internet connection. At first, I couldn't figure out what had happened and fortunately because I had made my editor a co-host, the meeting did not close. It took me what seemed like forever to realize I had no internet, grab my cell phone and enable my hotspot, and pray that I had a strong enough signal to hold my internet connection so I could rejoin via my laptop and continue with the PowerPoint presentation. I was able to do this and everyone patiently waited for me to return. One person who had attended the last workshop where I spoke about how our amygdala can hijack our emotions and render us unable to think, commented that he bet my amygdala had me quite agitated! I agreed with him, we all

laughed, and I resumed the presentation. We were still able to complete the material on time.

What really surprised me in this workshop was the number of questions that were asked. One pastor, in her first call, was really struggling, so I offered to have a private zoom with her and anyone else who felt needed advice. She took me up on my offer and we had a private zoom call two weeks later. This PCUSA pastor had been in her first call less than one year and after having taken the "Basics of Church Finance" workshop, she was very concerned about the state of her church's finances. In our discussion, she revealed to me that the church had eight separate checking accounts, each for a specific aspect of ministry, i.e., women's ministry, men's ministry, youth ministry, Deacon's ministry, etc. They also had a general account that was, in theory, utilized to receive donations and pay normal operating expenses. Unfortunately, the balance reflected on that general account statement versus the balance reflected on the bank statement did not match. She was told it had not "been in balance" for years and no one could figure out why. She was also upset that her mentor and predecessor had left the church's finances in this condition and was struggling with her feelings of anger and disappointment.

After listening to her and asking clarifying questions, I suggested several solutions to her to try and get their general account in order and then how to streamline the finances of the church in general. Frankly, it was shocking to me that the church was so cavalier about this situation so I queried her about any financial reviews or disclosures required from her Presbytery. She stated they did not require this. She did state that the church had several church members review the books annually but just made a note about the inaccuracy of the finances.

After reviewing steps she should take and what to do if she faced pushback, we moved to a discussion about her feelings on ministry and her disappointment in how she was trained. She felt that even though she had been an intern at this church and had an MDiv, that she was not prepared to handle the administrative side of her work as a solo pastor. Again, while this is anecdotal, it reaffirmed my conclusion that seminaries are not properly preparing their students for all aspects of pastoring a church. At the end of the zoom call, we agreed that she could follow up with me whenever she needed and I extended the offer to review any policies she wanted to put in place prior to obtaining support and agreement from her Session.

The completed and revised workshop guide for all four modules can be found in Appendix I, and a summary version of the PowerPoint presentations can be found in Appendix J. A listing of all the comments from each workshop can be found in Appendix K.

Strategy Three

My third strategy for goal three was to use the feedback gathered from the workshops to refine the take home booklet that will accompany each workshop. I reviewed and utilized all the comments, revised the completed guide, and sent it in its entirety after the completion of the last workshop. I must say that this was truly a labor of love for me. It consumed over three months of time, but was very rewarding to me. I feel strongly that God has called me to help pastors improve in this area and in doing so, hopefully reduce their sense of frustration and burnout.

Strategy Four

My fourth strategy was dependent upon available time. If I would have had enough time, I would have scheduled a three-month follow-up with those who attended the workshops and if needed, revise the workshop materials accordingly. Unfortunately, due to the size and scope of my project (the workshop guide alone was 100 pages), I did not have time to follow up with those who attended the workshops. However, I would like to follow up with them at a later time to ascertain if they have been able to utilize any of the information or forms I provided in the guides and workshops.

Evaluation for Goal Three Outcomes

My success was measured by an evaluation survey that was administered after each workshop session. Any helpful comments provided were used to edit the completed workshop guide. As a visual of those survey scores, I have created a chart for each of the five survey questions. Each question will be shown and then the results for that question for all four modules. I will discuss what this graph is telling me and then repeat for all five questions. A copy of the disaggregated survey results and the associated comments can be located in Appendix L.

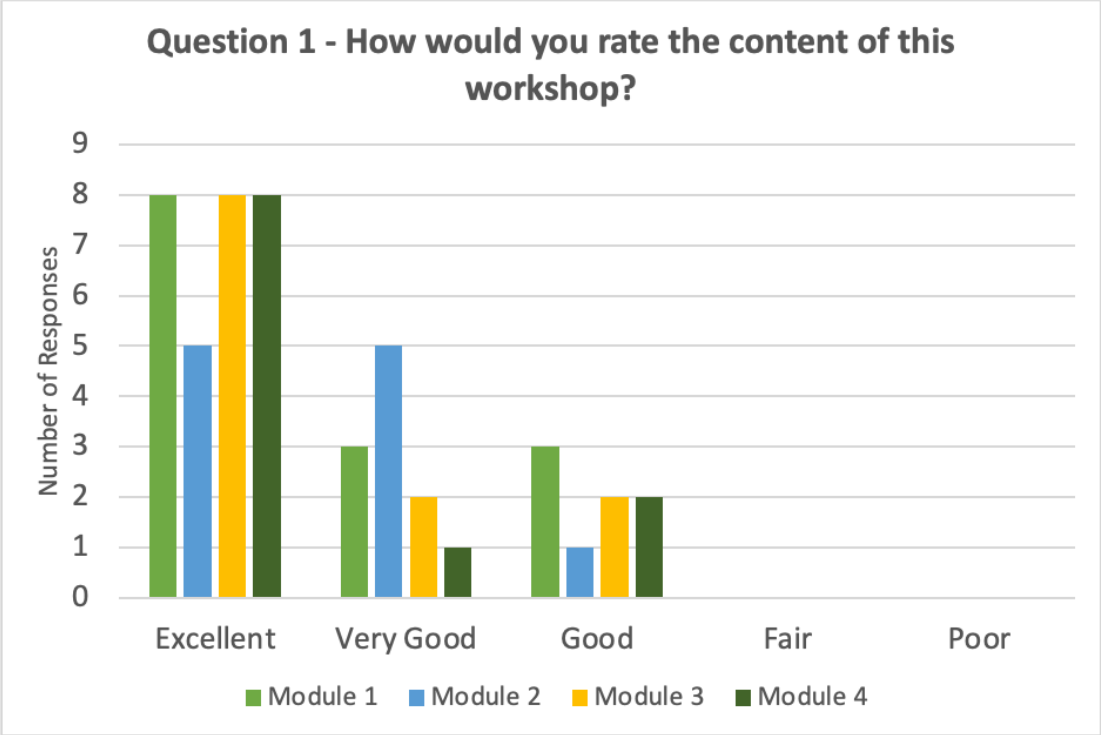

Figure 1: Question 1 Survey Monkey Results

As I evaluated the results from this first question, I could see that the first, third, and fourth module received the greatest number of the choice of excellent as compared to the second module. And the second module had an equal number of excellent and good. As I pondered this information, I believe the second module was not as straightforward in its content as the other three. While I felt I had nuanced the information, if I repeated this module I would rethink its presentation and flow.

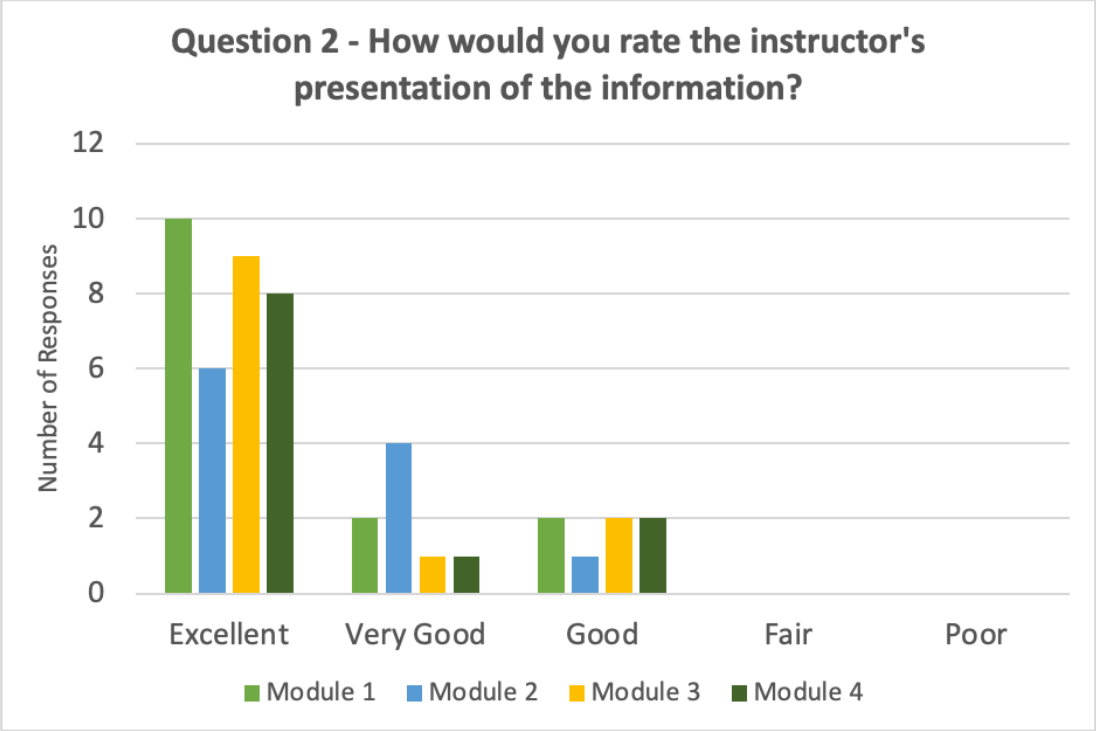

Figure 2: Question 2 Survey Monkey Results

It is very clear to me that the first module received the highest marks. I believe that is because I had numerous example and forms that the attendees could utilize. I would also conclude from these responses that the information in the second module missed the mark in the way I chose to present it. Additionally, the third module had several case studies related to conflict resolution and the fourth module had examples of specific financial documents that added in their learning.

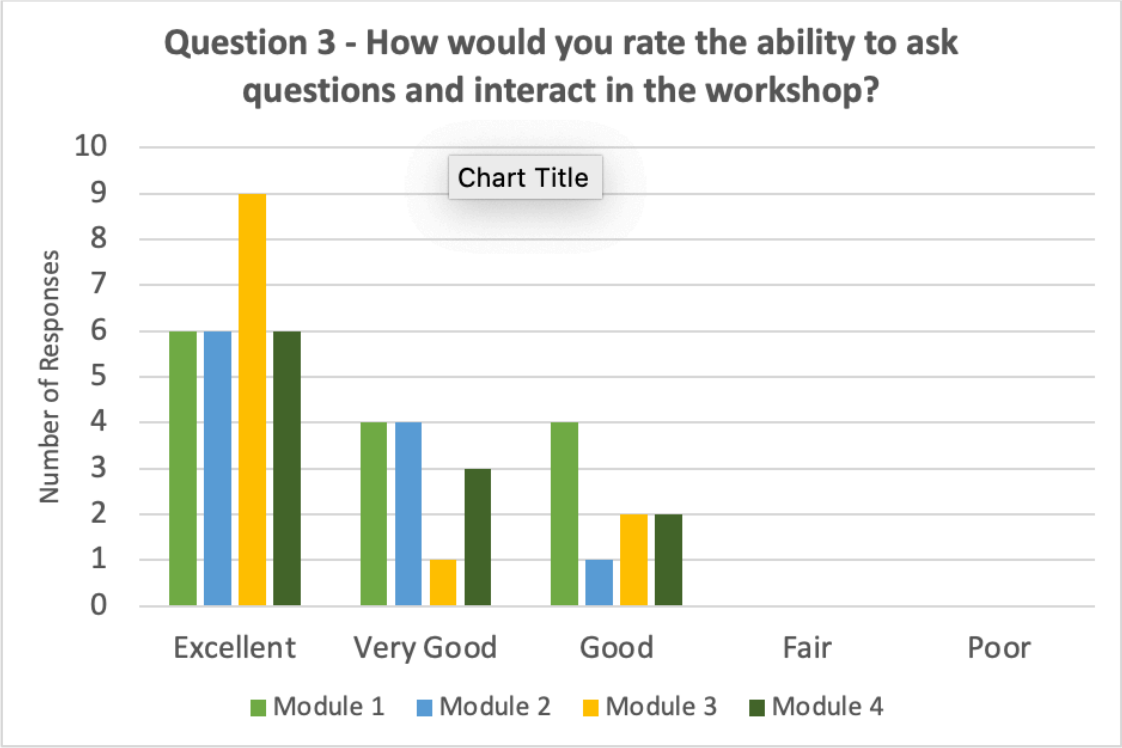

Figure 3: Question 3 Survey Monkey Results

These results surprised me as I felt I had made sure there was time for comments and questions in each workshop. As I reflected back on module 3 – Conflict Management and Resolution, I realized that I had created a case study based on comments from the first module and I had stopped the screen share and opened up the "room" for general conversation about the case study rather than having them post comments or questions within the chat. I believe the other three modules would benefit from this type of interaction. As I move forward, I will add time for face-to-face group exchange.

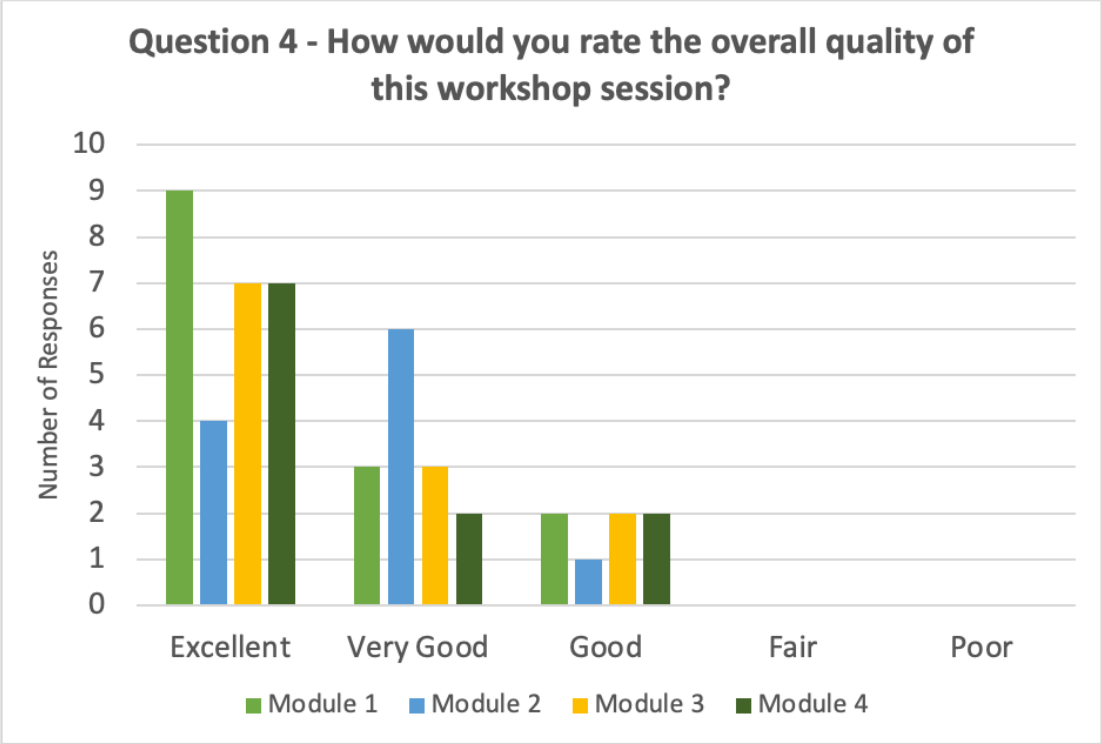

Figure 4: Question 4 Survey Monkey Results

Clearly the first module was the best received. I felt two and three were smoother in my delivery, but these answers tell me that the presentation of the content, and the examples offered carried more weight. The results on module 4 surprised me as I had technical issues with the Zoom platform and lost my side of the connection for five to seven minutes. I expected that might impact the overall quality rating of this module but it did not. Overall these responses were encouraging as no one rated the quality of the four workshops below "good" and the majority were either "excellent" or "very good."

The first four responses definitely indicated to me that I needed to retool the second presentation. While the responses never fell below "good" on these four questions, module two did not appear to resonate with the attendees as I had hoped.

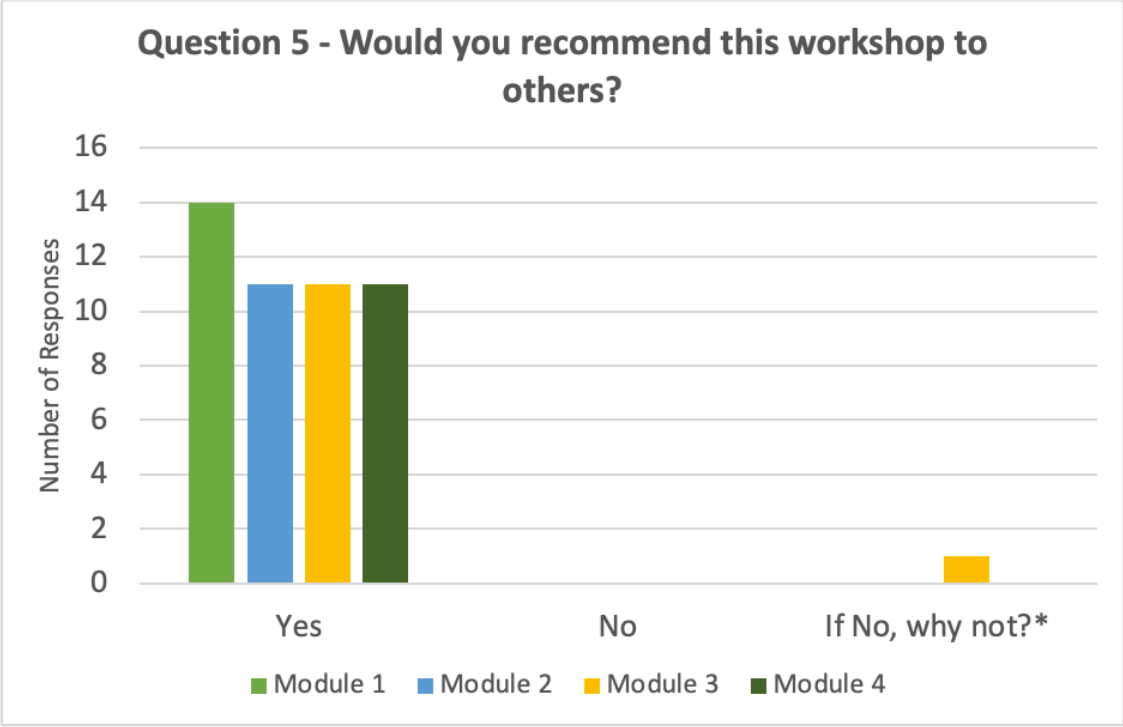

Figure 5: Question 5 Survey Monkey Results

Of all the responses to my survey, these responses encouraged me the most. In spite of the perceived shortcomings of module two, or the technical difficulties of module four, all but one person would recommend all four workshops. This is important information to me as the presenter as I intend to relaunch these workshops after I have completed this work and have been asked to present the "The Basics of Church Finance" to the New Worshipping Communities (NWC) within our Presbytery sometime in 2024.

I was confused by the lone "No, I would not recommend this workshop." I looked at the individual's responses to see if he or she had made a comment as to the "why not?" The response to "If No, why not?":

> The material is useful in so many different areas and the presenter is extremely knowledgeable. She kept to the stated timeframe for the presentation and allowed for questions in multiple points throughout the presentation.

Given that the comment was positive, I think that the "no" answer was selected in error.

With all this said, I found that the time I spent writing the guide and preparing the PowerPoint presentations was time well spent and resulted in workshops that added value to those who attended. While time consuming and at times, nerve-wracking, it was a very rewarding experience to be able to share my research and my knowledge with others.

What's Next!

While working on this dissertation has taken an immense amount of time and effort on my part, I would like to continue to build on the first four workshops. In speaking to many Millennials and Gen Z, YouTube seems to be a very popular internet platform. I would like to break my four workshops into smaller pieces, record them, and make them available on YouTube, adding them as time permits. In addition, I hope to offer my services as an advisor/mentor to any pastor who would benefit from one-on-one training.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Biblical and Theological:

In what ways does a theology of Christian leadership, as found in both testaments as well as in additional theological writings, inform, direct, and provide healthy pastoral examples for the ways in which we are called to manage our staff and volunteers, specifically in the areas of delegation, accountability, and conflict resolution?

Throughout the course of my biblical research, I often found that I made certain assumptions about the clarity of a given biblical topic, only to then find those waters murky. I already determined that developing a theology of leadership would not be as simple as listing out primary and secondary characteristics as found within the pages of scripture. Why? Because context is an important element of scriptural interpretation and application to any given situation. Context, both biblical and personal, helps to shape the way an individual will interpret and apply biblical concepts in church leadership.[47] But I initially presumed that I would be able to develop and articulate a theology of leadership from biblical examples and additional theological writings as long as I understood the context of those same examples. What I discovered was a need for fluidity within some aspects of theological leadership and thus I needed to maintain an open mind and thought process during my research.

[47] Huizing, "Bringing Christ to the Table": 68.

To start with, while the definitions of these two terms, theology and leadership, are independent of each other, a working theology of leadership must take both into consideration. If we are unable to integrate our theological focus with our leadership style and goals, we may find ourselves quite frustrated. Let me explain.

Theology means thinking and studying about God, and God's intentions for creation in the scriptures. Biblical theology is defined in the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* as follows:

> Biblical theology is principally concerned with the overall theological message of the whole Bible. It seeks to understand the parts in relation to the whole and, to achieve this, it must work with the mutual interaction of the literary, historical, and theological dimensions of the various corpora, and with the inter-relationships of these within the whole canon of Scripture. Only in this way do we take proper account of the fact that God has spoken to us in Scripture.[48]

Leadership is the process by which a person effectively influences, directs, and manages others to achieve a set goal. Biblical leadership simply takes this and applies it to influencing, directing, and managing a specific group of God's people toward God's purpose, as emphasized in scripture.[49] Seems simple enough, yet the practicality of leading in this way often falls victim to our own hubris. Therefore, creating a theology of leadership simply by combining these terms is at best vague and difficult to apply. The problem lies in the changing nature of leadership, both in terms of congregational culture and societal context. Ammerman, in the book *Studying Congregations,* reminds us that congregations, and those we lead, are shaped by both their theological traditions and also

[48] T. D. Alexander & B. S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 3.

[49] Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 25.

the larger societal and culture context in which they live.[50] Yet, I feel that God intended for the function of leadership to be important. In Genesis, we see God creating order out of chaos and then assigning jobs and responsibilities to humans:

> Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."**27** So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.**28** God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28).

Furthermore, if God saw fit to create humankind in God's image and task us with the management of creation, that management must include leadership of others. This leadership/management must reflect God's love for creation and, if done in accordance with God's intentions, then God's manifest love should be evident in both style and content.[51] Pastors cannot just rely on generalizations about leadership theory. Rather, they need to have a grasp of how their faith, under the governance of God and with Christ as the focus, extends into their leadership of staff, volunteers, and congregants.[52]

That being said, my research did provide me with many specific and situational biblical leadership examples, contextual examples that are helpful in the formation of training materials and helpful to develop a broad theology of leadership – a theology that encompasses both culture and context. With this in mind, I chose to focus my research on three areas: 1) Old Testament words for leader/leadership, examples of leadership, and

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[50] Nancy Ammerman, "Culture and Identity in the Congregation," in *Studying Congregations*, edited by Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 79.

[51] James R. Wibberding, "Wisdom Literature and the Psalms," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 88.

[52] Huizing, "Bringing Christ to the Table": 73.

application of the same, 2) New Testament words for leader/leadership, examples of leadership, and application of the same, and 3) examples of leadership from the women of the Bible along with what two other theologians have contributed to the conversation. I will conclude with a summary and broad statement of what a theology of leadership might entail.

Old Testament

As I began my research, I looked for specific words for leader or leadership in reference to the idea of a godly leader in the Hebrew Old Testament. To my surprise, there were at least eight different verbs that could be associated with leading people, but the most often occurrence of the use "to lead" or "leader" was in reference to God.[53] Words used to indicate the leading of people were more often descriptive of rulers as a function rather than the action of leading. Nonetheless, it is helpful to examine some of these words for human leader, to determine which root word may be best applied to Godly leadership.

The first is *nāśî',* which is derived from the root verb *nāśā'* which has the connotation of being lifted up, chosen, or elected.[54] This term is used to refer to leaders of tribes and communities. In the following passages, the word for leader or leaders, comes from the same root, *nāśā.* In Numbers 34, Moses was directed by God how to apportion the land in Canaan:

> The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **17** "These are the names of the men who shall apportion the land to you for inheritance: the priest Eleazar and Joshua son of

[53] Richard M. Davidson, "Leadership Language in the Old Testament," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 11.

[54] Walter de Gruyter, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin/Boston, 2017), 1122.

> Nun. **18** You shall take one leader of every tribe to apportion the land for inheritance" (Numbers 34:16-18).

And again, in Joshua 9, after Joshua had made a treaty with the Gibeonites and in spite of the trickery of the Gibeonites, the leaders of the congregation held fast to the treaty:

> But the Israelites did not attack them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. **19** But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we must not touch them" (Joshua 9:18).

There are two other examples for the word leader/leadership. First is the Hebrew word *śar*, which is a noun and would apply to multiple types of leaders, i.e., tribal leaders (Judges 5:15), royal officers (Jeremiah 26:11), or even those holding a priestly office (Ezra 8:24).[55] The other Hebrew term for leader is *nāgîd,* which is related to the verb *nāgad*, and translates as "the one who is elevated."[56] We find it used in three primary ways within the Old Testament. One way refers to generic leadership, whether within the military (1Chr 13:1), or the temple staff (1 Chr 9:20), the second is to reference a specific office, as is the case with such phrases as *nāgîd habāyit* which refers to the leader of the palace (2 Chr 28:7), and the third way is the noun *nāgîd* and is used to note the national leadership or kingship as frequently seen in the books of Samuel and Kings.[57]

One might argue that the noun used to describe the kings that ruled Israel might be a good term – particularly a man like David, who is described as being a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). However, the term used to describe these kings,

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

including David, is *melek* which is translated literally as king – whether or not that king was over Israel or over Israel's pagan enemies.[58]

One final term that I felt better captured the idea of leader in the spiritual sense is the noun *'ebed* which translates as servant.[59] This term is used to describe many persons in the Old Testament including Abraham (Gen 26:24), Jacob (Gen 32:4), Joshua (Jos 24:29), Hannah (1 Sam 1:11), Samuel (1 Sam 3:9), Jesse (1 Sam 17:58), and David (1 Kings 14:8) to name a few. And while each of these were recognized as servants (*'ebed*) of God, not all were called as leaders. I found that those who were called as leaders often shared similar leadership qualities, i.e., they were all recognized as possessing a nature associated with a Godly servant, they were relational and obedient, and often those previous characteristics led to the ability to create the necessary transformation to lead God's people.[60] Transformation both within themselves as leaders and, in the case of some leaders, the ability to utilize their relational and transformational abilities to impact those they were called to lead.

These traits of leaderships as seen in obedience, servant nature, relational skills, and transformation are just as important today as they were in Old Testament times. The ability to naturally possess all these traits is unusual. In reality, many of these traits were learned by our biblical predecessors, either by God's instruction and/or by accepting the

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[58] Walter Elwell, ed., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1263, http://app.logos.com/ (accessed April 13, 2023).

[59] Samuel P. Tregelles, LLD, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures,* 600, http://app.logos.com/ (accessed April 13, 2023).

[60] Skip Bell, "A Biblical Theology of Leadership for the Church," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 389-392.

mentoring/advice of others. If we examine the call of Abraham, we see profound trust and obedience as he is called to leave his land and his family and go where God directed him. In return, God gives him a three-fold promise: 1) the promise of land, 2) the promise of progeny too numerous to number, and 3) the promise that he would be blessed and be a blessing to others (Genesis 12:1-7). Interestingly, we do not really see God calling Abraham into a leadership role other than the leader of his extended family, but we do see this in his descendants, particularly Moses.

Leadership Style and Lessons from Moses

Moses, anointed as God's servant (*'ebed)*, was called by God to a huge leadership challenge – lead a rebellious, ragtag group of people out of bondage and into a new life (sound familiar?). Pastors may not think of themselves as a leader like Moses, but each person called into a leadership position in ministry will face some of the challenges that Moses faced. Many may feel unprepared, reluctant, even incapable of facing many of the leadership challenges that they will encounter sometime during their tenure as pastors. Moses felt all of those same feelings. Five times in chapters 3 and 4 of Exodus, we hear Moses express his doubts about his own abilities to do as God asked of him:

> But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"…**13** But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" **4** Then Moses answered, "But look, they may not believe me or listen to me but say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.' **10** But Moses said to the Lord, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." **13** But he said, "O my Lord, please send someone else" (Exodus 3:11,13; 4:1,10,13).

Each time Moses posed an objection, God responded with an answer or a solution - either with a direct answer or by providing another (Aaron) to share the load. Perhaps we have

our first lesson. If God has called you, God will help you, but you have to be willing to acknowledge you need help and be willing to accept the same.[61] Sometimes those solutions will come from the advice of others, sometimes from your willingness to acknowledge your own areas of weakness or lack of training, and be open to receiving help/instruction from others. At other times, it will be your ability to recognize that not every task belongs to you and learn the art of delegation.

Like most leaders, both in the secular world and in ministry, recognizing the need to delegate may be difficult, but delegation is a necessary leadership tool. Successful delegation occurs when you have passed some important responsibility or task to another person, selected the right person to take on this same responsibility or task, and maintain the appropriate level of control over the process or expected outcome.[62] Let's examine three times that Moses needed to delegate and how he successfully navigated this task.

As Moses was following God's call, he began to find the task of managing all the requests of the people overwhelming. Enter Jethro, Moses' father-in law. Jethro recognized that Moses could not continue to carry the burden of judging and answering all of the people's needs. Jethro gave Moses the following advice:

> You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. **22** Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. **23** If you do this and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their homes in peace" (Exodus 18:21-23).

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[61] Roy E. Gane, "The Pentateuch," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 57.

[62] Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007), 105.

Within these words of Jethro, we note four important qualities to successful delegation: 1) select the right people, 2) give them authority, 3) give them specific instructions, and 4) don't completely abandon your responsibilities – keep the important tasks; those tasks that only you should do.[63]

In the book of Numbers 11, we read the story of Moses crying out to God that the burden of leadership, with the constant complaining of the Israelites, was becoming too much for him:

> I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. **15** If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my misery."**16** So the Lord said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting and have them take their place there with you. **17** I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people along with you so that you will not bear it all by yourself" (Numbers 11:14-17).

Here we have a second example of God directing Moses to prepare others to take on leadership roles. God understood the difficulties and frustrations that Moses faced and provided solutions that often included selecting others to assist. But notice, just like with Jethro's advice, Moses must choose the right people. In this case, they are individuals that are already recognized as leaders among the various tribes. Depending on the size and experience of your staff/volunteers, team leading can be an effective strategy and certainly biblical. But there will be many times when you must be directive and take the lead. Even though Moses received help to carry the leadership load when needed, there

[63] Ibid.

were plenty of times when he, at God's direction, made decisions alone as he led the Israelites on their wilderness journey.[64]

Our third example from Moses' time as a leader is one of mentoring. Mentoring is a critical leadership skill as it allows pastor-leaders to off-load tasks, prepare the next generation of leaders, and allows others to develop leadership skills. We hear about Joshua acting like an apprentice throughout the story of Moses. Trust developed between these two men such that Moses seems to recognize certain traits in Joshua. Moses encouraged Joshua to follow God' teachings, thereby helping to move this fledging nation toward maturity in their relationship with God. In the Jerusha Drummond article on "Leadership Formation Through Mentoring in the Old Testament," Drummond say this about the relationship of these two men:

> Joshua was a trusted friend, was Moses' military general and mentee. Moses corrected Joshua twice applying wisdom and knowledge. When Moses returned from the mountain, Joshua informed him of war in the camp during the celebration of the molten calf (Ex. 32:17). On another occasion, Joshua rebuked two men for prophesying in the camp (Num. 11:27-29). Moses countered by informing his mentee that the sound of the campsite was victory and celebration (Ex. 32:18), and the second correction was that it would please him if all the Lord's people were prophets (Num. 11:29).[65]

This gradual mentoring of Joshua, beginning in Exodus and continuing through Deuteronomy, culminated when Moses asked God to appoint the next leader:[66]

> Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, **16** "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation**17** who shall go out before them and

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[64] Thom S. Rainer, "Selecting and Building Leadership Teams," in *Christian Leadership Essentials,* edited by David S. Dockery (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 194.

[65] Jerusha Drummond, "Leadership Formation Through Mentoring in the Old Testament," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, Issue 1, Volume 9 (2019): 3, https://www.regent.edu/journal/journal-of-biblical-perspectives-in-leadership/moses-and-joshua-relationship-leadership-formation-through-mentoring-in-the-old-testament/ (accessed April 30, 2023)

[66] Ibid.

> come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep without a shepherd." **18** So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; **19** have him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation and commission him in their sight" (Numbers 27:15-19).

Given the extensive training and leadership role assumed by Joshua, I will examine Joshua in more detail. But I would be remiss if I did not mention that along with Moses' successes as a leader, particularly in the area of delegation, he also had failures. Moses, just like you and I, had moments of weakness and doubt. Unfortunately for Moses, one of these moments resulted in his inability to enter the promised land:

> Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels; shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" **11** Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff; water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their livestock drank. **12** But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me, to show my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them" (Numbers 20:10-12).

This was the leadership failure that is most likely remembered, but what was it about this incidence of failure that is helpful for us? Moses was instructed to speak to the rock, but his anger got the better of him and he struck the rock. This occurred with the second generation of Israelites, the generation that had not witnessed all the miracles that their parents had witnessed. In addition, Friedman states that, "Moses did not appreciate that the new generation had not been raised as slaves where physical coercion and beatings by the taskmasters were a common occurrence."[67] It appears that this failure on Moses' part demonstrated his inability to adjust to a new situation with a new group of people and

[67] Hershey H. Friedman and Linda Weiser Friedman, "Even Great Leaders Make Mistakes: Learning Leadership from Moses," *Journal of Leadership and Management* (2018): 13(3), Baruch College Zicklin School of Business Research Paper No. 2019-03-02, 20, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3338569 (accessed April 22, 2023).

thus God knew that Moses was not the one to move them into their new land.[68] Leaders must be able to adapt to changing circumstances, a lesson that was likely well-learned by modern day pastors during the time of the pandemic.

The stories of Moses' leadership provides our first window into the necessity of reliance on God, the willingness to acknowledge when you need help, the ability to accept advice from others, delegate tasks where appropriate, and mentor the next round of leaders. While God selected Joshua to succeed Moses, it was Moses who mentored and directed Joshua to be the leader that takes the next generation into the land that God had promised long ago. It is to Joshua that I next turn to explore the characteristics and actions that makes for a successful, godly leader.

Leadership Style and Lessons from Joshua

Joshua had the good fortune to have extensive time under the tutelage and trust of God and Moses. His life was a tapestry of leadership development, transition, and execution, both as Moses' aid and in the assumption of leadership after the death of Moses.[69] Unfortunately, many pastors do not have the luxury of extensive time in leadership training, thus it is important that these same pastors understand the components of good biblical leadership and learn from these biblical examples of successes and failures. Serving God as a pastor-leader should be characterized as both a gift as well as a commission from God.[70] Some might argue that leaders are born with their innate leadership skills, but the story of Joshua demonstrates that leaders, when

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Katherine Haubert and Bobby Clinton, *The Joshua Portrait* (Altadena, CA: Barnabas Publishers, 1990), 75.

[70] Jiri Moskala, "The Historical Books," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 67.

called by God, can be developed. After all, Joshua started life in Egypt as a slave and we have no knowledge that he possessed leadership capabilities. And while I do believe some individuals have innate strengths in leadership, I also believe that leadership skills can be developed if the person has the temperament and willingness to take on this role.[71] There are numerous examples of Joshua's development as a leader, but I will examine only a few.

We read about the gradual development of trust between Moses and Joshua when Joshua's leadership skill was recognized by Moses and used when the Israelite army was sent into battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17: 8-16). Not only was Joshua to lead this battle, but he was also charged with selecting those who would go into battle with him. God was preparing Joshua as a military leader, a necessary skill for the domination of the promised land. And not only did God see to his development as a military leader and strategist, but Joshua was exposed to God's direct dealings with Moses, thus enhancing his spiritual development.[72]

We find examples of this in Exodus and Numbers. First, when Joshua chose to remain in that holy place even after Moses returned to the camp (Exodus 33:11), and again, when Joshua experienced the Lord sending His spirit upon the seventy leaders (Numbers 11:17). Joshua proved his willingness to take direction and be trustworthy and thus God chose to ordain him to leadership as evidenced by the passing of the mantle from Moses to Joshua found both in Numbers 27:18-23 and again, in Joshua 1:1-18. This passing of the baton, so to speak, happened in front of

[71] Ibid, 79.

[72] Jerusha Drummond, "Leadership Formation": 3.

the Israelites so that there could be no doubt that Joshua was the chosen leader, anointed and commissioned by God.[73]

> Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and bold, for you are the one who will go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their ancestors to give them, and you will put them in possession of it. **8** It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:7-8).

Joshua led God's people during a time of change, anxiety, and, one could argue, moral decline as evidenced by the repeated negative influence of those they were charged to conquer. They needed a decisive leader who exhibited confidence yet relied on God. Joshua's leadership characteristics were both situational and relational and presented another example of servant leadership. The Israelites needed to believe in Joshua and trust his legitimacy and authority. Author Tom Tonkin, in his exposition from "Joshua: A Leader with a Biblical Perspective and Divine Power", suggests that in order for a leader to be followed and respected, that leader "must occupy a position within a follower's perceptive value chain such that the influence, or power exerted, is effective."[74]

That word "power," as referenced above, often evokes a negative response, but part of Joshua's success as a leader was the power given to him by God. A key to both successful leadership as well as failure in leadership can be linked to the use or misuse of power.[75] Joshua's power came from his willingness to submit to God, to trust in his relationship with God, and to reach out for help from God when needed. We have an

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[73] Haubert and Clinton, *The Joshua Portrait*, 79-80.

[74] Tom Tonkin, "Joshua: A Leader with a Biblical Perspective and Divine Power," 11, https://www.academia.edu/18519276/Joshua_A_Leader_with_a_Biblical_Perspective_and_Divine_Power/ (accessed April 20, 2023).

[75] Moskala, "Historical Books": 80.

interesting example of this in the battle with the Amorites:

> On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israelites, Joshua spoke to the Lord and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."**13** And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation took vengeance on its enemies (Joshua 10:12-13).

Clearly, Joshua's power came from God, and God's willingness to listen to and answer Joshua's request. I am not suggesting that we, as leaders, just need to have God perform a miracle for us and all of our leadership challenges will be over. I am suggesting that we need to maintain a close relationship with God and recognize that any "power" we may have over others emanates from God. We could easily fail in exercising our leadership authority by leaving God out of the leadership equation, beginning to believe in our own abilities as being superior to others, or failing to listen and learn from the lessons God gives us in scripture.

Take the case of the failure at the first attempt to defeat the Ai found in Joshua 7. Joshua was confused and disheartened at the loss of this battle and asked God why, only to discover that one individual failed to follow God's strict rules about taking "devoted" things – things belonging to the enemy that were forbidden for the Israelites. While this was not a failure on Joshua's part, as leader, Joshua was responsible for addressing this failure. Haubert and Clinton, in their study of Joshua's leadership, state it like this, "One person out of harmony with God can stop the flow of divine might. In order for power to be restored, a holy harmony among God's people must be maintained."[76] The responsibility to restore this harmony rested on the shoulders of Joshua, and after praying to God and following God's instructions to root out the person responsible for committing this breach (Achan) and kill him, the Israelites were successful in the second

[76] Haubert and Clinton, *The Joshua Portrait*, 61.

attempt at a battle with Ai (Joshua 7-8). To us as 21st century readers, this may seem extreme and violent, however God understood that if the disobedience of one individual was left unchecked, it would corrupt many more.

Joshua continued to learn throughout his lifetime and was able to draw upon his mentoring experiences with Moses, as well as his own direct successes and failures in his leadership role, which culminated with this closing statement:

> Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).

So, what can we take away from Joshua with respect to leadership? As we have seen with just these few examples, the story of Joshua provides us with an excellent example of the stages of leadership development and how each built upon the next. Joshua moves from a slave to Moses' aide at the beginning of his leadership journey, and then to a military leader, administrator, and spiritual advisor by the end of his leadership journey.[77]

Good leaders are lifetime learners. They learn from others, they learn from their successes, and also from their failures. But godly leaders have the advantage of being able to return again and again to the scriptures to remind them of the nature of their covenantal role as a pastor-leader. And while Joshua was certainly this type of leader, what happens when a leader is faced with times of transition and/or upheaval? This last individual was called to servant leadership during just such a time as these. I will examine the team building skills of Nehemiah and how he maintained his God-given authority when faced with both external and internal conflict.

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[77] Ibid, 3.

Leadership Style and Lessons from Nehemiah

Nehemiah arose as a servant leader during end of the Babylonian exile. Jerusalem, as a city, had been demolished by the Babylonians in the 6th century, and all the best and brightest were taken into captivity and transported to Babylon. After their time of captivity had been fulfilled as declared by the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 29:10), Cyrus, the king of Persia who had conquered Babylon, allowed the return of the captives to Jerusalem (Ezra 1). Nehemiah received word from Hanani, one of the Jews who had returned, that Jerusalem was in complete disarray, that the walls and gates were gone making the inhabitants vulnerable to attack, and thus leaving those who had returned disheartened (Nehemiah 1:1-3). I would venture to say that many pastors felt this same sense of loss and disheartenment over the impact of the pandemic on their churches, and what church looks like after a season of change and upheaval. Nehemiah was no different as this information brought Nehemiah great distress as he wept and mourned for them, fasted and prayed for them. It is within this prayer that we get our first glimpse of Nehemiah as a servant leader.

It is interesting to note that Nehemiah refers to himself as a servant (*'ebed)* of the Lord and the Israelites as servants several times within this prayer, but also in both his opening and closing prayer to God found within the first chapter of Nehemiah:

> I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **6** let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for your servants, the Israelites, confessing the sins of the Israelites, which we have sinned against you….**11** O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man" (Nehemiah 1:5-6;11)!

I point this out to show that the concept of servant within the sphere of God's chosen leaders was an important attribute to their success, and that leaders must have a true concern for others within their sphere of influence.[78] This is especially true for pastor-leaders who are charged with the care of their congregation, as well as the necessity to exhibit that same care for those who work as paid staff or volunteers.

Nehemiah was cup-bearer to the current king, Artaxerxes, and as such was able to communicate directly with the king when the king inquired about his obvious distress as found in Nehemiah 2. Nehemiah used that opportunity to speak to the king about his concern for his Jewish brethren, the city Jerusalem, and his desire to return to assist. It is unlikely that Nehemiah had ever seen Jerusalem, and more likely that Nehemiah was born in Babylon and had only known Babylon. But clearly, he had heard the stories of his people, of his faith, and as a result, had developed a deep and abiding trust in God. It would appear that it took four months of prayer before Nehemiah either gathered the courage to make a bold request of the king, or four months before he felt that God was calling him to this task.[79] We have no evidence that Nehemiah possessed the requisite skills as a builder nor did it seem reasonable that he would be able to accomplish what had not been accomplished in over fifty years – the rebuilding of Jerusalem.[80] But after listening to Nehemiah's distress (and four months of Nehemiah praying), the king not only granted his request to return, but provided him with what he will need to accomplish his mission (Nehemiah 2:8-9). Herein lies a lesson - prayer is a powerful tool, a tool that

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[78] Cyril J. Barber, *Nehemiah* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1991), 21.

[79] John MacArthur, *The Book on Leadership* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2004), 22.

[80] Barry Gane, "Nehemiah: The Servant Leader," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 247.

must be at the forefront of a leadership toolkit, and a tool that should be utilized for guidance and direction, particularly in challenging circumstances.[81]

It should be noted that many decades before, the priest, Ezra, had begun the rebuilding of the Temple and that a revival of sorts had taken place in Jerusalem, but the rebuilding of the city itself, its walls and gates, had not been accomplished (Ezra). Why this was, we are not told but God knew the needs of the people, the city, and raised up these two leaders – Ezra as the priest, and Nehemiah as the builder, to fulfill God's promise of restoration as spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. These two leaders were called to provide spiritual support and stability. Pastor-leaders are called to be like these two men – to provide a spiritual backboard and a steady, calming presence in the face of confusion and anxiety.[82]

As Nehemiah began the rebuilding project, he examined and assessed the needs of the city, and deftly delegated tasks to a variety of people (Nehemiah 3). Nehemiah established a sense of a cooperative effort as seen in the assignments and repetition of the words "next to him" throughout chapter 3. It would appear that everyone understood what the task was, what was expected of them, and had the tools/materials to complete the task. This coordinated effort, in spite of repeated interruptions, resulted in rapid progress.[83] The art of delegation, and it is an art, is an important leadership skill. Pastor-leaders are often guilty of taking on too much and thereby creating unnecessary stress on themselves as well as limiting the use of the gifts of those around them.

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Peter L. Steinke, *Uproar* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 50-51.

[83] Barber, *Nehemiah*, 52.

However, the work of Nehemiah was not without opposition and strife. Almost immediately, upon word of the work that Nehemiah endeavored to accomplish was announced, opposition arose amongst those who saw their own power and position in danger (Nehemiah 2:6). Pastor-leaders will encounter opposition both from external and internal forces. The challenge lies in learning how to use the skills of negotiation, delegation, and adaptation to counter these opposing factions. Learning when and how to utilize these skills can be key to the calming of tensions as well as the opportunity to understand that not all conflict can be resolved by command. It takes the ability to adapt to changing situations, context, and people.[84] Nehemiah possessed these skills and wisely used them to his advantage.

First, with respect to the external opposition, the chicanery of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab, as well as other enemies of the Jews and their discouragement of the wall-rebuilding efforts (Nehemiah 4), was countered by Nehemiah's willingness to advocate for them directly to God. During times of challenge and conflict, pastor-leaders must be willing to be bold in their faith and trust in the power of God as an example to others to persevere in the face of adversity.[85] Additionally, Nehemiah was wise enough to avoid all of their traps and frankly, to call them out for their deceitfulness. As leaders, sometimes we must speak the truth with boldness while being willing to turn our fears and anxieties over to God and not allow them to rob us of our mission.[86] This requires us

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[84] Terasa Cooley, *Transforming Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 96-99.

[85] Kent Annan & Jamie Aten, "Faithfully and Boldly Following Christ in the Face of Opposition," *Better Samaritan in Christianity Today*, entry posted April 2021, https://www.christianitytoday.com/better-samaritan/2021/april/faithfully-and-boldly-following-christ-in-face-of-oppositio.html. (accessed April 23, 2023).

[86] Cyril J. Barber, *Nehemiah*, 70.

to tap into both the authority granted us by God and through the calling of a given congregation, and the authenticity that we must be conscious of in our use of this authority.

As Nehemiah's leadership story continued, Nehemiah was faced with many distractions and interruptions to the rebuilding campaign. While continuing to deal with external threats and conflict, he faced internal conflict from those who had been disadvantaged by their own people. Part of dealing with conflict, whether external or internal, is being willing to truly stop and listen to those who present a complaint or criticism.[87] In chapter 5 of Nehemiah, we read the outcry of the people against their Jewish brethren. It may have been easier for Nehemiah to ignore the cries of the poor people who felt extorted by the wealthy, but Nehemiah had the wisdom to understand that all voices must be heard and injustice could not be ignored:

> So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? **10** Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. **11** Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them" (Nehemiah 5:9-11).

There are three lessons here for pastor-leaders: 1) when you receive complaints (and you will), stop, listen, and ask clarifying questions; 2) research the facts of what you have heard to determine the validity; and 3) if you find that the complaints are valid, have the courage to address those complaints.[88] Speaking the truth in love can be very

[87] Robert B. Sloan, "A Biblical Model of Leadership," in *Christian Leadership Essentials: A Handbook for Managing Organizations*, edited by David S. Dockery (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2001), 21.

[88] Barber, *Nehemiah*, 91-92.

challenging, but not confronting and not addressing the truth likely could result in turning a festering issue into all-out war.

Nehemiah, with God's help, found success as a leader and completed his building project in a mere 52 days:

> So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. **16** And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

While the task was, at best, daunting, Nehemiah never lost sight of both his calling as a leader and his goal of the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem. He did not get bogged down in the minutiae of details, he delegated with knowledge and authority, he encouraged and listened, and he trusted that God would see him through the completion of his appointed task. While Nehemiah was transactional in his task management, his leadership was transformational in that he did not neglect the spiritual needs of the people.[89] The remainder of the Book of Nehemiah tells the story of those who returned to live in Jerusalem, the reestablishment of covenantal law as read by Ezra and understood by the people, and the reforms instituted by Nehemiah (Nehemiah 7-13). Nehemiah was truly a servant-leader, a man commissioned by God, who never wavered even in the face of opposition.

Nehemiah's leadership during times of conflict and chaos provides concrete lessons for pastor-leaders:

- Pray, pray, and pray.
- When you assign tasks/assignments, make sure everyone has a clear understanding of your expectations and make sure you provide the tools for success.

[89] Gane, "Nehemiah": 255.

- When faced with conflict - stop, listen, and make sure you verify the facts. Then act swiftly to mitigate further conflict and provide feedback to make sure all parties understand the resolution. Good summary list – such a list is needed at the end of each person you discuss, Moses, Joshua, etc.

Of all the lessons we can learn from Nehemiah, and there are many, his resilience and reliance on God is paramount for any leader who desires to be effective in godly leadership.

Conclusion of the Old Testament Words and Examples

Our examination of a few Old Testament word descriptors that point to servant-leaders while brief, still provides a picture of godly leadership as seen with these three individuals: Moses, Joshua, and Nehemiah. All of these individuals possessed similar skills but used them as appropriate within their given context. They were all relational, both in the reliance on God and their demonstration of the mutuality of shared leadership.[90] They provided clear communications and vision when necessary to those under their authority but also listened to those under their authority. They accepted advice and delegated tasks in accordance with needed skills, but keep those tasks that were appropriate for their leadership-level of authority. And, with the help of God, they took initiative to correct situations that were creating distrust and conflict which disrupted the work they had been called to do. All of this is to say, that these men were servants of God called both in their mission and in their authority. Skip Bell, in his book on Servants and Friends, say it thusly:

> God embodies the idea of servanthood. In demonstrating His nature, He call us to likewise focus on others, to be servants as He is a servant. As godly servants, we must look past ourselves and see others. We exist for the sake of others. Leadership is not selfish; it is service for others.[91]

[90] Bell, "Reflection": 342-343.

[91] Ibid, 354.

Pastor-leaders must be willing to learn from these examples, and set aside their own ego and perhaps agenda, for the benefit of the Kingdom of God.

Lessons from this Old Testament examination should align with the stories and lessons found within the New Testament. To confirm this truth, I shall turn to an examination of New Testament leadership examples beginning in the same fashion as with the Old Testament – the study of words.

New Testament

As with the Old Testament, I wanted to examine the word(s) for leader or leadership that may be found in the original translation of this testament - Biblical Greek. Not surprisingly, just like with Hebrew, there is no one word within the Biblical Greek language that captures our modern equivalent concept of leader or leadership. But there are several words that require a closer examination to see if the translation of the word "leader" fits the context of leader/leadership as we apply that word today.

The first word to examine is *kephalē.* An accurate translation for this word would be "head" denoting the head or leader.[92] However, it is interesting to note that this word is used in reference to the Godhead, the man as the "head" of the woman as found in 1 Cor. 11:3, and Jesus Christ as head of the church as found in Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:18-19; 2:9-10; 2:18-19. For example, in Colossians, Paul used this word to describe Jesus' authority:

> For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, **10** and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority (Colossian 2:9-10).

[92] Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), 860.

Again in 1 Cor. 11:3, Paul laid out the God head as having authority but then links similar authority to a man (husband) and a woman (wife):

> But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ (I Cor. 11:3).

The use of this term as meaning the "head" or "leader" is only used by Paul. When Jesus used this same term, his use was the physical meaning of the word, i.e., physical head of the physical body. One of the early church fathers, John Chrysostom (c. 349 – 407), Archbishop of Constantinople, argued that "head" does not mean "leader" in 1 Cor.11:3. To summarize his interpretation of this scripture, Chrysostom stated that if we take "head" with the sense of governing by linking man with this authority, the passage may lead to false ideas because Jesus Christ as Christ was the only true authority.[93] Given this inconsistent usage of this term between the gospels and the Pauline Epistles, this term is not what we are seeking in terms of our use of leader.

The next word I will examine, which comes closer to the meaning "leadership", appears in the phrase "forms of leadership" in 1 Corinthians 12. This Greek word is *kubérnēsis*, which can be translated as leadership, administration, governing, and steering or piloting, as in piloting a boat.[94]

> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues (I Corinthians 12:28).

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[93] John Chrysostom, "Homily 26 on First Corinthians," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1, Volume 12, edited by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co), 151-152, https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf112/npnf112.iv.xxvii.html. (accessed April 25, 2023).

[94] Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 897.

I like this concept and use of this word, but we only find it in this one instance referencing leadership; the other uses of this word are directly related to the act of piloting a ship. However, I do see a solid connection between the gift of leadership being God-given, particularly in the case of those we deem church leaders, as well as the charge to "steer or pilot" the staff, volunteers, and congregation as part of a pastor's calling.

A better word for lead/leader/leadership is *proistēmi,* which translates as lead, be in charge of or over, rule, or direct.[95] Paul used this word in his first letter to the Thessalonians to encourage the church to be respectful to those who were doing the work of the church:

> But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have **charge of you** in the Lord and admonish you;**13** esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves
> (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

The use of this verb in 1 Thessalonians would indicate that members of the church were exercising what we would call leadership, which included teaching and correcting as well as working hard – the work of both pastors and other individuals called to a leadership position. There is, though, a subtlety in the use of this verb *proistēmi* that deserves attention.

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states this:

> The eight instances of προΐστημι (*proistēmi)* in the NT contain only intransitive forms of the verb. They occur in the Pauline corpus and fall under the nuances….In most cases προΐστημι seems to have sense "to lead"… but the context shows in each case that one must also take into account sense, "to care for". This is explained by the fact that caring was the obligation of leading members of the infant Church.[96]

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[95] Ibid, 1221.

[96] Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co, 1964), 701, https://app.logos.com/books/LLS%3ALGNTI/references/bible/ (accessed May 1, 2023).

In the sense of caring for the church, 1 Thessalonians speaks to the character of the leaders, i.e., that they lead by an expression of personal care and love for those they are charged to lead. I believe this is the type of leader and leadership that Jesus modeled for us in the gospels and the mantel of leadership that Paul endeavored to take up in his visits and letters to the various churches.

But what about the word servant, the word that I felt best described those called to leadership position in the Old Testament? Is that same term applicable in the New Testament? Given that there are numerous Greek words that translate as servant, for example, *diakonos, doúlos*, *oiketes, and therapon,* it is important to look at the context of their usage to determine if they can be associated with leader/leadership.

Diakonos, while translated as servant, is better understood as the term deacon in today's ministries.[97] This term is used in reference to those chosen to aid in the ministry of the apostles, with the origin of this ministry found in the Book of Acts:

> **1** Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. **2** And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3** Therefore, brothers and sisters, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, **4** while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." **5** What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. (Acts 6: 1-5)

And while we certainly see the ministry of deacons as an essential component to the care and compassion of the laity, we do not necessarily, but perhaps incorrectly, associate it

[97] Jon Paulien, "Leadership Language in the New Testament," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 136.

with leadership given that modern scholarship often sees the first deacons as being the first pastor; and "serving at the table" meant "serving Communion."

Doúlos presents an interesting conundrum. It is best defined as a slave, one who is in a relation of bondage or involuntary servitude.[98] Both Jesus and Paul use this word to refer to themselves in relation to God and others. Jesus, in speaking to his disciples in the Gospel of Mark, says this:

> But it is not so among you; instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. **45** For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:43-45).

Paul refers to himself as a slave to Jesus and to the gospel numerous times throughout his letters (Romans, Galatians, etc.) but also references that in Jesus all are equal:

> There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

Yet because this term is correctly translated as slave, irrespective of its usage, its reference to slavery makes it a less than desirable choice for our postmodern reader. The ties to our history of slavery, and the injustices associated with the same, make the postmodern use of this word complicated and even triggering, thus I feel reluctant to use this in reference to general leadership. I will reference this word, but sparingly, in order to clarify Jesus' picture of his leadership.

Oiketes is best understood as a household servant (1 Peter 2:18).[99] While related in function to the service role like a deacon (*diakonos)* and the slave/servant definition of *doúlos,* it does not quite suffice for the term leader. Nor does the term *therapon which,*

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[98] Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study,* 483.

[99] Ibid, 1028.

while translated as servant, is better defined as "a faithful friend to a superior, who solicitously regards the superior's interest or looks after his affairs, not a common or domestic servant."[100] A derivative of this word is used for those who care for the sick or provide therapy. One could argue that pastors often take on this role, but that does not connote leadership as we think of it.

As with our Old Testament examination of words for leadership, we can see that there are many differing words for leadership in the New Testament but most, if not all, are based on their context and could be misused if the context is ignored. If I were to pick one word that best encompassed a more current view of leadership, it would be *proistēmi.* This word seems best adapted to leadership in a pastor-leader role and is used both to indicate leadership within the church as well as leadership within one's own sphere of influence.[101]

As we continue our exploration of New Testament leaders/leadership, we must not ignore the focus of the New Testament – the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and his gifts of abundant and eternal life for all humanity. Jesus, the very incarnation of God, understood His mission, vision, and purpose. He spoke with authority and deep knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures. He had the ability to illuminate those same scriptures in new ways, often at odds with the leading authorities. Jesus was the ultimate theologian, preacher, teacher, and leader. Given these facts, it seems appropriate to first exam a few of Jesus' teachings and then see how these teachings were applied by the early church as found in Acts and a few of the letters of the apostle Paul.

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[100] Ibid, 732.

[101] Paulien, "Leadership Language": 130.

Leadership Style and Lessons of Jesus

Volumes have been written about Jesus' leadership style and the lessons he taught to both his disciples and the crowds that gathered to listen. Given that Jesus is God, fully human and fully divine, it would be arrogant to think that we, as mere mortals, would lead with the same perfection. But lead we must, and looking to the author and perfecter of our faith seems a wise choice. The entirety of the New Testament captures only what was written and remembered about Jesus. He lives and breathes in each one of us through the work of the Holy Spirit. And to try and capture each of his teachings/lessons on leadership would be yet another book. Instead, I will select several lessons from the four Gospels that exemplify and provide concrete application to our human attempts to lead in a Christ-like manner.

Our first example comes from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus taught about authority and rank – two necessary components of leadership, but two that are often misused. Jesus was speaking to both the crowds and his disciples, warning about placing burdens on others but being unwilling to carry the same. He used the scribes and Pharisees as an example then closed with this statement:

> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. **9** And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father, the one in heaven. **10** Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. **11** The greatest among you will be your servant. **12** All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted (Matthew 23:8-12).

Power can be heady and because this is often true, the use of power can fall victim to our own hubris. When this happens, the misuse of and even abuse of power can occur.[102] This

[102] Gordon MacDonald, "Your Most Important Conversation," *Christianity Today,* Spring, 2010, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2010/spring/importantconversation.html (accessed May 3, 2023).

is not how Jesus desires us to lead nor the example He provided. Jesus himself resisted the temptation of power offered to him by Satan during his forty days in the desert (Matthew 4:9). And again, after Jesus fed the five thousand, those same people desired to make Him king, but Jesus avoided this trap (John 6:15). Jesus taught us to lead by loving. While this can sound simplistic and counterintuitive, Henri Nouwen, in his book *In the Name of Jesus*, captures this beautifully:

> What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love… The long painful history of the Church is a history of people ever and again tempted to choose power over love, control over the cross.[103]

In a similar vein, Jesus taught that to be a leader you must be willing to humble yourself, to be a servant first. Jesus drives this point home in numerous examples from all four gospels - Mark 10:42-45, Matthew 20:20-28, Luke 22:25-27, and John 13:1-20. The concept of servant-leadership comes directly from the words of Jesus. A pastor-leader is called to lead, but must be willing to show humility in that leadership. Laurie Beth Jones articulates this well when she writes, "Jesus, the leader, served his people. Most religions teach that we are put here to serve God: yet in Jesus, God is offering to serve us."[104]

As we consider this concept of humble service, it is helpful to remember that Jesus often used the metaphor of a shepherd. In the Bible, shepherds are used to represent leaders of God's people (Isaiah 63:11; Jeremiah 23:2). A shepherd's job was to watch over the sheep, protect them from enemies, and then defend them when needed. They tended to sick, the wounded, and the lost sheep. In the teachings of Jesus, shepherds love

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[103] Henri J. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Co., 2002), 77.

[104] Laurie Beth Jones, *Jesus, CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* (New York: Hyperion, 2011), 250-251.

their sheep and earn their trust. The sheep know, love, and trust the shepherd above all others. All of this is a metaphor for Jesus as the good shepherd and we as His sheep. Jesus contrasts the shepherd with the hireling, who deserts the sheep in times of danger because he does not love them:

> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12** The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. **13** The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep (John 10:11-13).

Andrew Yee, in his article on leadership, calls this "redemptive leadership" as Jesus practiced His leadership through His willingness to be humble.[105] Power and humility need to co-exist but remain in balance for a pastor-leader to be effective in leadership while projecting the necessary humility as a means of extending God's grace, love, and mercy into the world. Given our human tendency to enjoy the privilege of power, this is a compelling lesson to keep at the forefront of our leadership relationships.

In spite of His humility, Jesus was bold and unbowed by the public critique of His ministry or His mission. He was not afraid to speak to the truth of scripture as God intended, and would give a blistering rebuke to the religious leaders when necessary.[106] He endeavored to correct His disciples misguided thinking and frank misunderstanding of His teachings, His corrections to the religious authorities, or His power:

> When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. **6** Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." **7** They said to one another, "It is because we have brought no bread." **8** And becoming aware of it, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread? **9** Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember

[105] Andrew Yee, "Redemptive Leadership," *Christianity Today*, April, 2012, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2012/april-online-only/redemptiveleadership.html (accessed April 19, 2023).

[106] Sloan, "Biblical Model": 15.

> the five loaves for the five thousand and how many baskets you gathered?[10] Or the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many baskets you gathered? [11] How could you fail to perceive that I was not speaking about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!" [12] Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:5-12).

Jesus spoke the truth, not to gain recognition or power, but rather, to educate and when necessary, correct. Pastor-leaders must be willing to do the same, but not out of selfish ambition, or the desire to be right, but rather to emulate the boldness of honesty spoken with the right motives. Christian leadership often requires a willingness to take the path of resistance and lead in spite of the criticisms or whims of the culture.[107] It is during these times of conflict and stress, that pastor-leaders must seek out the truth of any given situation and discerning truth can be challenging. Unfortunately, because we are human, the ability to understand the truth must go beyond just an appraisal of the facts as they are presented - context matters. At times, we may be unwilling to see the truth because doing so will require us to take actions that might make us uncomfortable. But following Jesus' examples in John, freedom is found in the truth:

> Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).

In other words, a leader's authority comes not from power but from knowledge and the willingness to speak the truth.

Another part of a leader's calling is developing other leaders and allowing them to share both authority and responsibility. Jesus, though God, did not hold onto power and authority but chose to teach others so they could also know and understand what godly leadership should look like. He granted the disciples authority and power to carry out His

[107] Ibid, 19.

mission after He departed. To be given responsibility without authority will hamper the efforts of those you are desiring to lead.[108] And with that responsibility and authority is the need to properly equip those selected for this role.

C. Gene Wilkes, in his book *Jesus on Leadership,* lists five necessary steps in the equipping of others for godly leadership:

- Encourage them to serve;
- Qualify them to serve;
- Understand their needs;
- Instruct them; and
- Pray for them.[109]

In the Gospel of John, Jesus offers words of encouragement to the disciples:

> I have said these things to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:25-27).

In His encouragement, Jesus held high qualifications for those who would take up the mantle of leadership and follow him (Luke 14:26). He did this because He understood their human nature and their needs. Jesus instructs his disciples throughout the entirety of the four gospels, even when they failed to fully grasp what He was trying to teach them. This is the same for pastor-leaders today. We must encourage those who we are developing, but also be willing to clearly state the demands of ministry and restate that all of the work is ultimately for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

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[108] C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 181.

[109] Ibid, 189.

As we come to the end of the discussion on Jesus and leadership, the last comment in Wilkes' list was "pray for them."[110] Anyone who desires to lead must first be willing to be led by God and pray for those they will serve. Jesus prayed for his disciples as He knew what they would face when He departed and their real work began. We have a beautiful example of this in John's Gospel:

> I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.**10** All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them.**11** And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one (John 17:9-11).

Those called to leadership and granted authority to lead must pray for those entrusted to their care. Whether those individuals are staff or volunteers, praying for those people is a necessary component, and I would say one of the most important components of your job as their pastor-leader.

As we conclude the discussion on the leadership of Jesus, we can see how the church first utilized these lessons in the Book of Acts. This book functions as a bridge between the Gospels and the Letters of Paul, and provided a history and a snapshot of the fledging church. Many of our church structures come from the examples found in Acts as the Holy Spirit worked to established a sense of order. Ministries of both deacon and overseer/bishop/elder were first created in the early church as a response to the needs of the growing body of believers. These structures provide examples of leadership choices and lessons, which provide a good foundation for leadership in the Church today. Sometimes it is good to return to the fundamentals and be reminded of how the early church handled leadership challenges as they arose.

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[110] Ibid, 189.

Leadership Style and Lessons from Acts

All of our leadership lessons from Acts generated from the work of the Holy Spirit and prompted the actions of those early followers.[111] Just as Jesus was relational in His leading and teaching, so too was the Holy Spirit by acting as both a unifier and empowerer.[112] These two facets are important qualities in successful leaders – both in ministerial and secular roles, and it is these roles that guided those first believers into actions of leadership.

After Jesus ascended, the eleven remaining disciples, now referenced as apostles, felt the call to replace Judas. After praying on it, they selected two men and drew lots with the lot falling on Matthias (Acts 1:24-26). The selection of individuals to join in the leadership of the church requires thoughtful prayer. And while we typically would not draw lots if faced with a choice between two good candidates, the concept of letting the Spirit direct our choice is an important one. Notice that in the case of this selection process, the eleven prayed but it was the Spirit that moved to unify their process of selection.

Another example of the unifying work of the Spirit is seen when the early church had experienced significant growth and dissension began to occur. Some were complaining that the distribution of food resources was unfair and that many were being overlooked (Acts 6:1-2). This grumbling resulted in the expansion of leadership responsibilities with the creation and selection of what we now term as deacons. Stephen

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[111] C. Adelina Alexe, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 168.

[112] Ibid.

and six others were selected to assist in the care and compassion side of this growing ministry:

> And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3** Therefore, brothers and sisters, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, **4** while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." **5** What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. **6** They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them (Acts 6:1-6).

This concept of distributing authority (empowerment) helped solved the perceived unfairness in food distribution but notice what select actions occurred in the selection process. They selected men of good-standing in the community, i.e., trustworthy, full of the Spirit, and wisdom. Not only did this delegation of duties solve a problem, it allowed the remaining apostles to focus on prayer and the spreading of the gospel message.[113] This criterion should hold true today for both the men and women who are selected for leadership positions as it allows for the pastor-leader to not become overwhelmed with needs such that "grumbling" occurs, the pastor-leader becomes weary, and others cannot develop their leadership skills.

In addition to the creation of what we think of as deacons, the concept of elders existed within the Jewish community and were, at that time, older, trustworthy men. While the postmodern church may take issues with elder positions being held by only men and thus some have expanded this to include women, this was the context of the first century church. Acts mentions this several times, but we see Paul, who had been accepted

[113] Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 184-185.

as an apostle, in his travels with Barnabas, selecting elders to head the churches he planted:

> And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe (Acts 14:23).

The book of Acts demonstrates the skill of collaboration with the assignment of tasks (delegation) to keep the administration of the church running smoothly. C. Adelina Alexe, in her chapter on "The Acts of the Apostles" in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*, states that this model of co-leadership and cooperation endorses the following characteristics in pastor-leaders (this is a partial list): humility, teamwork, encouragement of each other, making decisions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and respect.[114]

Within the story of the early, emerging church, how the church handled conflict within the leadership team provides valuable lessons. In chapter 15 of Acts, we read of a conflict between Paul and Barnabas:

> After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Come, let us return and visit the brothers and sisters in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." **37** Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. **38** But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. **39** The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. **40** But Paul chose Silas and set out, the brothers and sisters commending him to the grace of the Lord. **41** He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:36-41).

This story provides several valuable insights, but determining who was right is not as easy. In Barnabas, we see an individual who extends patience with Mark even though Mark had deserted this difficult work earlier in their join ministry. Barnabas must have

[114] Alexe, "Acts of the Apostles": 180.

felt that Mark was salvageable so much so that he parted ways with Paul in order to continue with Mark. Barnabas demonstrated risk taking that turned out well within the pages of Acts, particularly in the empowering of others, but we read very little of Barnabas again in the pages of scripture.[115] Can we deduce that Paul was in the right? Not exactly. What we can know is that Paul appeared more focused on the success of the mission of the church and Barnabas appeared more focused on this individual. Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing as it can provide opportunities for clear boundaries to be drawn. In this case, Paul drew the boundary and it is Paul's ministry that becomes a good portion of the New Testament. This is not to say the Barnabas was wrong or focusing on an individual is wrong. Jesus stressed the importance of the one in his story of the loss sheep in His parable in Matthew 18. But it is equally importance to keep your eye on the overall mission and goals of the church. Neither Paul nor Barnabas were given a handbook on leadership - both had to rely on the Holy Spirit for discernment and in this case a separation became necessary. Acts gives us stories of discernment as a method for reminding us to stay focused on the goal – the spreading of the good news to all corners of the world.[116]

Throughout the entire Book of Acts, we read and experience the work of the Spirit. The church grew both in numbers and geography, allowing both Jew and Gentile to work towards a common mission. This merging of cultures was transformative to the spreading of the gospel message. We read about this in the story of Peter and Cornelius

[115] Bernard J. Sauvagnat, "Barnabas: A Study in Empowering Leadership," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 335.

[116] Matthew J. Skinner, *ACTS* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020), 114-115.

from Acts chapters 10 and 11. The unifying work of the Spirit within this story allowed a critical leadership lesson to be learned. If Jesus' message of inclusiveness and his command to spread His message to all nations was to be understood and followed, then close contact and the relaxation of certain purity laws needed to occur.[117] Adelina Alexe summarizes these leadership lessons from this story, and similar ones in the Book of Acts, as it pertains to godly leaders as the following:

> Godly leaders -
>
> 1) "Are formed and informed through prayer.
> 2) Obey God despite internal and external opposition.
> 3) Follow God while their understanding is still partial.
> 4) Communicate their spiritual discoveries with conviction and courtesy.
> 5) Listen to one another.
> 6) Cultivate accountability.
> 7) Recognize divine involvement by the fruit of the Spirit.
> 8) Change views and adapt based on progressive revelation.
> 9) Value divine approval above cultural conveniences."[118]

The stories and examples from Acts provide a reminder that the tasks of administrative leadership must be aligned with the work and guidance of the Spirit. Pastor-leaders are never perfect, but when they combine the authority and guidance of the Spirit with both the servant model of leadership expressed by Jesus and the unifying and empowering work of the Spirit, their work in the church becomes glory for God.

It is within the book of Acts, that this same work of the Spirit changes Paul from the persecutor of this fledging church to the champion of the same. Paul's call and mission was specific to the Gentile churches and provides us examples of both success

[117] Alexe, "Acts of the Apostles": 172.

[118] Ibid, 175.

and failure within the bounds of godly leadership. How Paul dealt with this is our next point of discussion.

Leadership Style and Lessons from Paul

Paul's leadership successes and challenges are recorded in the pages of the various letters he wrote to the churches that he, with the help of others, had planted. As an exemplar for leadership, Paul's style and actions may seem counterintuitive and even, at times, impractical because Paul was often a leader in *absentia*.[119] Paul's style of leadership was very authoritarian versus collaborative, so my focus will be on his leadership attributes versus his execution of the same.[120] For the purposes of this paper, I will examine only a selection of his leadership attributes that addressed the ongoing problems at the Corinthian church, his joy with the success at the Philippian church, and a few closing comments about Timothy and Titus, Paul's successors.

The Church at Corinth – The Problem Child

Paul established the church at Corinth during his second missionary trip. This city was a bustling trade hub, and as such, had both a strong pagan and Jewish population. After he had departed, he began to receive letters about issues that were plaguing this new church and his letters found in 1 and 2 Corinthians primarily were sent to address these issues. It is within these two letters that we can glean leadership lessons that are still relevant today.

The list of problems within this church were numerous, i.e., immorality, idolatry, believers suing believers using the secular court system, the misuse of the Lord's table,

[119] P. Richard Choi, "The Pauline Epistles," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 203.

[120] Ibid, 187.

and the misuse of their spiritual gifts to name a few. And to make these issues more difficult to correct, Paul's apostolic authority was in question.[121] In chapters 8 and 9 of 1 Corinthians, Paul expounds on the idea of freedom and servanthood as it relates to himself and believers, "For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain all the more" (1 Cor. 9:19).[122] Paul unites two concepts that appear contradictory – freedom and enslavement (servanthood), but does so with the purpose of teaching this church that as leaders, they must submit first to the authority of God instead of exercising their personal freedoms thereby contradicting the servant model of Christ.[123]

Given the age-old issue of identity politics, an issue still very much alive today, Paul focused on removing identity-related barriers to harmony within this church. One might argue that his specific prohibitions against perceived disrupted forces are harsh and without understanding, but that would be missing his focus on love. In the thirteenth chapter of his first letter, Paul made the point that love was (and is) the focal point of Christian service and leadership:

> If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.**4** Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant**5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; **6** it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. **7** It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:1-7).

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[121] MacArthur, *Leadership*, 66.

[122] Note the use of the word slave is also translated as servant.

[123] Leslie N. Pollard, "Paul: Principles for Leadership and Contextualization," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 313.

Paul's first letter and admonitions appeared to correct and resolve many of the practical problems disturbing the church. But more trouble was brewing and Paul felt compelled to address the seeming leadership vacuum and the teachings of others. These troubles were causing interpersonal conflicts and raising questions about Paul's apostolic authority and that threatened to disrupt the peace and unity of the church. Paul understood that these issues needed to be addressed, but had enough awareness of the nature of a rebuke – both when and how to give one, that he hesitated to do so in person. Paul voiced his concern about needing to return to this church and why he chose not to return, and thus further grieve them by his presence. With this said, most rebukes/ corrections are best delivered in person so that any misunderstanding can be addressed on the spot. The use of electronic means (email), and even by telephone, leaves room for misunderstandings as you can miss non-verbal cues about how your rebuke/correction is being received and understood. But Paul's sensitivity to a personal visit did not stop him from attempting to correction misunderstandings about his motives.[124]

What we learn from this second letter is both Paul's defensiveness of his apostolic authority and his decisiveness under pressure. Paul does not claim that his authority to teach and rebuke comes from any other source other than from God:

> Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. **5** Not that we are qualified of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our qualification is from God, **6** who has made us qualified to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).

And he further understood that this church must grasp that his word was his bond – that he was not willing to vacillate in his decisiveness (2 Cor. 1:17). But foremost in both of

[124] William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 211-213.

his letters to this church, was Paul's desire to correct with love. And while Paul desired that this congregation experience the joy that comes from reconciliation, he understood that the joy and love must be centered in Christ.[125]

Paul expressed a deep reliance on God and trusted that the foundations that he (Paul) had laid would continue under the watchful eye of the Spirit. P. Richard Choi says this:

> Paul understood his leadership in the same way he understood his doctrine of justification by faith, according to which one is justified by faith apart from any human effort. Paul applied this same principle to his leadership, fully convinced that God's power would be made manifest in his life to the degree that he was able to reduce himself to nothing.[126]

I believe one of the hardest parts of leadership is the willingness to trust that God will continue to work in the life of those we lead, with or without our help.

While many of Paul's letters were sent to correct and exhort the churches he and his cohorts had established, the letter he sent to the church at Philippi was much more a treatise of joy at their accomplishments and a continued exhortation to keep moving forward with the knowledge that God was always at their side.

The Joy of God – The Church at Philippi

Of all of the letters that Paul wrote, in this letter, Paul uses the word joy or rejoice at least sixteen times. I mention this because at the time of this writing, Paul was imprisoned and the fear of execution looming. In spite of his circumstances, Paul desired that this church know that even if the worst occurred, he was confident in his eternal salvation and was desirous that they feel the same. Paul was deeply thankful for the

[125] Ibid, 258-259.

[126] P. Richard Choi, "Pauline Epistles": 204.

partnership of these people and wanted to encourage this community to not just stand firm in their faith, but thrive.[127]

Chapter 2 of this letter contains beautiful written words of encouragement and advice, and reminds them to maintain a mind-set of Christ in their leadership:

> If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, **2** make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. **5** Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:1-5).

For all leaders, but especially those in pastoral leadership, holding a heart of humility is a leadership trait that was not only practiced by Jesus, but also enacted by Paul. This trait of leadership is repeated throughout the stories in scripture, but yet is one trait that is easily forgotten in the headiness of leadership. Ego, while necessary to have the confidence to lead, can often become a danger to our leadership. When we succumb to our own ego-driven desires, we can lose sight of our calling as ambassadors of Christ, and begin to lead from a place of personal ambition. I believe that is why Paul exhorts them to look to the interests of others before their own. He was reminding them, and us, that not everyone enjoys the same level of authority, prosperity, access, and even basic necessities.[128]

Paul's concept of leadership training would be seen as counterintuitive, and even frivolous, in our society that is obsessed with formulaic concepts of leadership training

[127] Carla Swafford Works, "Philippians," *Women's Bible Commentary,* Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 581.

[128] Ibid, 583.

and even how successful leaders gain their knowledge and success. Choi, in his chapter on the Pauline Epistles, states this:

> But, if we listen to Paul, no number of skills, methods, or training can qualify one to become an effective Christian leader because the most important job of a Christian leader is to impart eternal life and to restore the image of Christ in fallen human being…[129]

While it is certainly true that every Christian's primary job is to spread the good news of the gospel, it is also helpful to obtain knowledge and practical skills in administrative leadership so that we do not become so consumed with these tasks, that our true calling becomes second place. I truly believe that God has enabled and encouraged His creation to learn and thrive in order to promote the Kingdom of God in all areas of life. And as I bring the discussion of Paul to a close, a few final words of advice to his successors and the concept of preparing future leaders of the church are found in these letters to Timothy and Titus.[130]

Future Leadership

Both Jesus and Paul understood the necessity of teaching and modeling leadership for the next groups of leaders. In the case of Jesus, it was the time spent with his disciples. And with Paul, it was Timothy and Titus, as well as the individual leaders at each church he planted.

Rather than argue about the authorship of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, or some of the prohibitions regarding women, I would point to the specific qualifications for leadership in the Church found within the pages of these letters. The author clearly calls on the

[129] Choi, "Pauline Epistles": 205.

[130] Modern scholarship disputes that Paul authored of the letters to Timothy and Titus, but the advice given is still valid despite authorship.

leaders to be ethical and honest and demonstrate the same servanthood attitude of Christ (1Timothy 3 and 4). In 2 Timothy, the author encouraged loyalty to the faith, grace to endure the race set before him, and warnings about the coming difficulties of leading in perilous times (2 Timothy). Titus is much the same, but the author spoke about the nature of the people of church and the importance of graciousness in chapter 3:

> Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, **2** to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone (Titus 3:1-2).

The author wanted these two men to learn how to shepherd this growing body of believers. We, as pastor-leaders, should desire this same thing. So perhaps it is helpful to return to the basics every now and then. Lee Eclov, in his article "What Kind of Pastor Am I?," said this in reference to the reading of these letters:

> If you've been trying to earn your ministry chops by reading leadership and church growth books alone, Paul's letters are both a relief and a kick in the pants. If God has called you to shepherding, reading about the centrality of faith building, prayer, godliness, and unity is like hearing your mother tongue in a foreign land.[131]

As I would hope be evident by my discussion of the selected scriptures of Paul, I would agree with Mr. Eclov, not just with the letters of Timothy and Titus but with the entirety of the Pauline corpus. And as we end our journey in New Testament, I want to conclude with brief summary of some the important points.

New Testament Conclusion

As with the Old Testament, the words for leader or leadership direct our attention to the actions associated with these terms, rather than a pure definition. It is within the

[131] Lee Eclov, "What Kind of Pastor Am I?," *Christianity Today*, February, 2014, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2014/february-online-only/what-kind-of-pastor-am-i.html (accessed May 6, 2023).

actions, particularly of Jesus, the early church, and Paul, that provide guidance on leadership. But it has also been important to recognize the influence of culture and context on the lessons found herein.

Jesus, as the exemplar for leadership within the early church, had much to teach both those early followers and those who choose to take on the mantle of leadership today. And while context and culture are important, due to the incarnational nature of Jesus, His teachings should take precedence over current factors that plague our society, both organizational and political, and instead inform us as we learn and practice leadership today.[132] It might be easy to set aside some of Jesus' more challenging teachings and examples, but in doing so, we would miss the pure nature of Jesus' motives and understanding of what the future would hold.

Because human nature has not changed all that much in these last two thousand plus years, the way in which Jesus demonstrated leadership may seemed paradoxical to us. He demonstrated many attributes of godly leadership in His willingness to be a servant rather than be served. And He did this so that the disciples could learn from His example the egalitarian nature of leadership.[133] He taught them about fairness, love, the interconnectedness of the Church, and the relational aspects of leading from a place of love. We, on the other hand, tend to let our authority go to our heads and often forget the servant-nature demonstrated to us by Jesus. It is in this seeming paradox, that the seeds of good leadership begin.

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[132] Stanley E. Patterson, "A Reflection on Leadership Principles in the New Testament," in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership,* edited by Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 357.

[133] Ibid, 359.

After His ascension, the Church was moved forward by the work of Holy Spirit. They had no leadership manual or guidebook, but they had the Spirit-filled leadership of the disciples, whose faith had been formed and matured under the guidance of Jesus. And this was evident in how they chose to expand leadership as the Church grew, delegate tasks, cooperate across cultures, and resolve conflicts. These lessons from Acts, while formed under a somewhat different context from where we find ourselves today, are still relevant.

Paul, as a missionary to the Gentiles, faced a hard road in his work. The Church today is also facing a hard road, particularly among younger people. In an article titled "Church Attendance Dropped Among Young People, Singles, Liberals" in *Christianity Today*, the following statistics were cited:

> Over the pandemic, Americans across all age groups were more apt to attend less frequently than to attend more frequently. Thirty percent of young adults dropped attendance after the pandemic, compared with 12 percent who upped it…Twenty-four percent of Americans 30–49 decreased their attendance, while 11 percent increased it. Among adults 50–64, 19 percent decreased while 9 percent increased. The decrease and increase among Americans 65 and older were 16 percent and 9 percent, respectively… COVID-19 may not have been the only factor driving young adults away from church. According to a Gallup poll released in December, American religion already was trending in that direction. More than a third of Americans surveyed said they have stopped attending religious services regularly in their lifetimes.[134]

But the leadership lessons from Paul, his willingness to lead by example, speak the truth in difficult circumstances, and recognize the need to mentor the next generation of leaders is as necessary today as it was in the days of Paul.

Before I close this discussion of biblical leadership, I wanted to take a moment to

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[134] David Roach, "Church Attendance Dropped Among Young People, Singles, Liberals," *Christianity Today*, January, 2023, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2023/january/pandemic-church-attendance-drop-aei-survey-young-people-eva.html (accessed May 5, 2023).

recognize several women leaders within the scriptures – Esther, Deborah, and Mary of Nazareth, the mother of our Lord. While there are other women whose faith provides examples of what it means to put your trust in God, these women not only trusted God, but their willingness to step in a leadership role provides another perspective on what it means to be a godly leader.

Female Biblical Leadership

I believe that theologians often give little attention to the contributions of women to the discussion of leadership, primarily because the scriptures are so replete with examples from men. But for me, Deborah, Esther, and Mary of Nazareth, the mother of our Lord, are three women that have voices that speak to me from the pages of scripture. While some of their leadership examples are overt, others are far more subtle but just as powerful.

Deborah was the only female, Jewish leader that was recorded within the time of the Judges. Were there more, we cannot say, but the mere fact that Deborah's story made it into the scriptures is remarkable given the patriarchal nature of the time. The Bible records the beginning of the story rather matter of factly:

> At that time Deborah, a prophet, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. **5** She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment (Judges 4:4-5).

One might ask the question, why Deborah? Were there no godly men available given that all the judges before and after Deborah were men. But I think the answer is that Deborah, irrespective of her sex, was the right leader at the right time. The pattern that is repeated within the scripture on the part of the Israelites is one of failure to stay true to God, repentance for that failure, and the calling of a leader to direct the nation back to God.

Deborah was not only the leader called for this but she is also called a prophet – the only one so designated in the book of Judges.[135]

At the direction of God, she called a military leader, Barak, from the tribe of Naphtali, and queried him as to why he had not mounted a military campaign against Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army and the enemy of Israel. Barak declared his unwillingness to go unless Deborah would accompany him, which she did but this caused Barak to lose any glory that may have been his (Judges 4:8-9). All of this came to pass and Barak, with the assistance of Deborah, was able to defeat the enemy. Interestingly enough though, Sisera is killed by another woman, Jael, and not by Barak or his army (Judges 4:21).[136]

This short story of Deborah provides us with an example of a leader who was not afraid to rely on, and make good use of, the talents of others – an excellent example of successful delegation. And we hear this in the Song of Deborah, "When locks are long in Israel, when the people offer themselves willingly, bless the Lord!" (Judges 5:2). Deborah was a willing leader, a woman who took the reins of leadership, relied on God, delegated to others, and won victory for her people. Trust is an important component of godly leaders and we, as pastor-leaders, would be well advised to rely on God and not just ourselves for successful outcomes.

Esther is another story from the Old Testament that provides us with a more nuanced picture of leadership. Esther's story occurred during the time of King Ahasuerus,

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[135] Anonymous, "Deborah's Leadership," *Fuller Seminary Next Faithful Step,* https://www.fuller.edu/next-faithful-step/resources/deborah/ (accessed May 24, 3023).

[136] Philip B. Payne and Vince Huffaker, *Why Can't Women Do That?* (Boulder, CO: Vinati Press, 2021), 62-63.

also known as Xerxes, a Persian King. While I will not recount the entire story here, the sitting queen, Vashti, refused a direct order of the king and was deposed. The king took Esther, a Jew who had been groomed to be a concubine of the king, as the new queen. Esther's leadership role only becomes apparent when the very life of her uncle, Mordecai, and her people are at risk. At the advice of Mordecai, Esther risked her life to appeal for mercy to the king and was successful. So where is the leadership lesson for us in Esther? I believe we find it in the advice given to her by Mordecai:

> Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. **14** For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" (Esther 4:13-14).

Being a leader is always risky, but being a godly leader requires a level of commitment and trust that is shown to us by Esther. She was willing to risk it all to save her people and in doing so, Esther provided us with a valuable leadership lesson. Leadership requires us to acknowledge problems and conflicts as they arise. We must be willing to confront those conflicts in a godly fashion such that those under our supervision are both corrected and perhaps saved - saved from termination, saved from poor performance, and saved from ruined relationships.

When we think of Mary, the mother of Jesus, I doubt many of us look to Mary for examples of leadership. However, I think we are missing important components of leadership that Mary's responses and behavior model for us. First was her willingness to subjugate herself to the will of God. Young, engaged, and now pregnant with the Son of God, Mary does not run from this likely frightening turn of events but rather embraces it.

Hear her own words from the Magnificat found in the gospel of Luke:

> My soul magnifies the Lord,
> **47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
> **48** for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
> Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed (Luke 1:46a-48).

Mary provided a lesson in humility. Leaders can learn from watching how Mary handled herself. She did not try to glorify herself and lift herself above others. Those who find themselves in a position of power, and church leaders are no exception, are often enamored of what they believe to be their unique position and authority. Jesus himself resisted the temptation that power offers. Henri Nouwen says this:

> What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life.[137]

Mary also reflected both the will to give of herself and sacrifice her reputation. These two qualities – giving and sacrifice, are leadership qualities. When we mentor others in their job, giving of our time and talents, we are allowing those individuals to experience growth and achievement. Giving of ourselves takes time and it takes sacrifice but when we do not do this, we are holding back the possibilities for others in our charge. As leaders we are called to model, as Mary modeled, the willingness to give and to sacrifice.

While there are more models of female leadership we could explore, I believe these three typify the essence of godly leadership. And before I conclude this chapter on what a theology of leadership should look like, I would like to present a few more lessons from two theologians – Karl Barth and Eugene Peterson.

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[137] Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, 77.

20th Century Theologians

At first glance, you may wonder at my selection of these two theologians but these two have had a deep impact on how I think about God, worship, and leadership within the sacred space of ministry. Both of these men have a slightly different view of the aforementioned areas, yet each speak to me in ways that I can both understand and deeply appreciate. As we are called to be leaders in the church, particularly pastor-leaders, it can be helpful to find those theologians who exposit scripture in a way that connects our spiritual selves with our desire to lead. As pastor-leaders, we need to be consistently opening ourselves to differing points of view to avoid hegemony. From a purely ontological point of view, Karl Barth is probably the most prodigious writer so I will begin with him.

Karl Barth, in his short book, *The Humanity of God* speaks to the role of Christ in relation to humanity. Christ is not an abstract concept but rather, in His humanity, gave us insight into the divine that might otherwise be too lofty for our minds to understand.[138] It is this very insight that allows us to enrich our own leadership skills as we admire and attempt to emulate the model of humble leadership found in Christ. While God does not need us, we need God and we are equipped by our creator for the work of the kingdom which, in my humble opinion, includes leadership.[139] In addition, we cannot create theology in a vacuum and that would include a theology of leadership. When we acknowledge God's humanity, we acknowledge the need for a change of attitude and an

[138] Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 46-47.

[139] Ibid, 53.

alignment of our Christian thinking such that our actions reflect this rather than some abstract thought.[140]

In Barth's commentary on Romans, he reflected on these verses:

> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. **4** For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. **6** We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; **7** ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; **8** the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness (Romans 12:3-8 - NRVSUE).

Thinking too highly of ourselves and our abilities can often be a leadership pitfall. Barth speaks to this when he focuses on "think soberly." He cautions against falling victim to the pagan virtue of sobriety versus the obedience to the miracle of God, and thus the arrogance and dogmatism that can overtake our thoughts and render this "sober thinking" a parody of what God intended.[141]

This same line of thinking is found in Barth's comment about what he terms "he that ruleth – earnestly"[142] (a more current translation is found above, "… the leader, in diligence" (Romans 12:8e)). Barth contended that earnest leadership exists naturally because of our relationship with God and not something that we will into being because we believe this is our gift.[143] The gift of leadership and the use of this leadership comes from God and should be exercised with all diligence which shows honor to God.

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[140] Ibid, 57.

[141] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 440.

[142] Ibid, 448.

[143] Ibid, 449.

Karl Barth was a complex thinker and many find his writings difficult to understand and even apply. I would argue that leadership is complex and hard – hard at times to understand and to get right, ergo studying someone like Barth and endeavoring to tease out his meaning is a beginning of understanding just how much wisdom it takes to become a good leader.

A counterpoint to Karl Barth, who is a challenging writer to read, is Eugene Peterson. As a pastor and theologian, Peterson wrote very directly but with the rich clarity of someone who has immersed themselves in scripture, in their relationship with God, and had deep desire to teach others what he himself had learned. While I enjoyed his translation of the Bible into a common vernacular, titled *The Message*, it is several other of his books that I find helpful as I think of what it means to be an effective pastor-leader.

In the introduction to his memoir, *The Pastor*, Peterson comments on the tendency to let the worldly concepts of leadership, "leaders are people who "get things done" and "make things happen"[144] inculcate our thinking. The danger in this is the diminishing loss of the ability to pay attention to what God is doing in the midst of our daily lives as pastors and to those we pastor.[145] While there are certainly helpful leadership models gleaned from the secular world of business, the leadership we are called to practice, even the mundane administrative leadership, must be rooted in our relationship with God and the biblical examples that have been provided for us within the scriptures. Additionally, as we think of what it means to be a pastor, the responsibilities,

[144] Eugene Peterson, *The Pastor* (New York: Harper One, 2011), 5.

[145] Ibid.

the required knowledge, and the impact of that on those who work for and with us, we must remember that this vocation is not just negotiated between us and God, but also between us and those we are called to lead.[146]

Peterson, in his book *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction,* uses the Song of Ascent Psalms to comment and teach on many facets of the life of a Christian and a pastor. In his comments on Psalm 129, he references the need for perseverance and within perseverance, patience. Both of these qualities, perseverance and patience, are necessary tools in the pastor-leader toolkit. At times, the work of the church, the call on the pastor to know everything, do everything, and be all things to all people is exhausting. This is where perseverance becomes necessary.

Patience within this sphere of perseverance reminds us that as humans, we will experience anger and exasperation with those we lead, but to pretend differently reduces our authenticity as humans.[147] This is when we need to dig deep and rely on God to understand the difference between righteous anger versus the anger we express at our lack of patience with others. The truth of it is that most of our anger is a result of impatience, fatigue, and frustration at the seeming lack of enthusiasm that we expect from our staff and volunteers but who seem to fall short of our ideal. Peterson reminds us that this is when we lean into that "long obedience in the same direction."[148] We are humans and we will experience these flashes of anger, but God, in His wisdom,

[146] Ibid, 104.

[147] Ibid, 123.

[148] Ibid, 124.

understand this and His Spirit prods us forward. To persevere in your leadership role will be daunting, but Peterson provides words of encouragement in this quote:

> It is the way of life we were created for. There are endless challenges in it to keep us on the growing edge of faith; there is always the God who stick with us to make it possible for us to persevere.[149]

Both Karl Barth and Eugene Peterson approach leadership from slightly different perspectives, but both acknowledge that the way of a pastor-leader is one that requires an abundance of grace and a deep reliance on God who provides that grace. If we could only remember this wisdom and return to it when that anger and frustration threaten to overwhelm us. Yet, the God who led the Israelites from bondage to freedom, who sent his only Son to claim victory for humankind, who sent His Spirit to lead the church is still present and active in the Kingdom today, we just need to remember that.

So where has this journey through the Old and New Testaments and several theologians brought us? How do we keep this relational, covenantal nature of God in the forefront of our relationship with those we lead? And how can all of these examples from scripture be used to apply a cohesive Biblical theology of leadership?

Conclusion – An Applied Biblical Theology of Leadership

Reading and understanding biblical leadership examples from all the various scriptural references and from the view of several theologians all, for me, point in the same direction – our relationship with God and how we reflect God in our leadership. As we explored these examples, what became clear is the cultural and contextual nature of leadership. Each one of these examples existed within a specific culture and context. This is true for us as well. As we think about our own leadership contexts, we cannot ignore

[149] Ibid, 128.

the influence of the surrounding culture. This influence presents itself in patterns of behavior that in turn, influence how we respond.[150] And as I stated in my introduction, it also impacts the way a given pastor-leader may choose to interpret and apply a given passage of scripture, and the context within which that application is taking place. For example, a pastor-leader may be faced with a situation of conflict. How they address that conflict may be more direct if it is arising from a staff situation or more nuanced if it is with a volunteer. As we think of the biblical examples referenced, all of these leaders (with the exception of Jesus) were volunteers leading volunteers. Yet in some cases, the leader chose a more direct approach to handling conflict (Joshua with Achan) or a more nuanced approach (Nehemiah with his enemies). Both were successful, both understood the nature of both the culture and context in which they were operating.

So, what are the components of an applied biblical theology of leadership that we can turn to when we are faced with the more secular tasks of administration, i.e. hiring, delegating, accountability, conflict resolution, and even finances? I believe it begins and ends with the nature of God, both in how God created us (*Imago Dei*) and how God relates to us. Joseph C. Rost, in his book *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century,* states that leadership is multi-directional, meaning it flows in a variety of ways, and is non-coercive.[151] Rost's book is secular and intended as an examination of business leadership yet those two components are apt descriptors of how God operates in our world and thus how we, as pastor-leaders, should also operate.

[150] Bell, "Biblical Theology": 377.

[151] Joseph C. Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 102.

God is relational, ergo the nature of godly leadership should be relational. As pastor-leaders, we are both leaders and followers. We lead those in our charge, and we follow the guidance of the Spirit and the examples found in the scriptures as both reminders and exemplars of how to lead. This is where the sacred should override the secular in our approach. This is where that "fluidity" comes into play. We are charged with the responsibilities of leadership, yet because of the covenantal nature (sacred) of those responsibilities, we will find more success when we can exercise the ability to lead and be lead.[152]

Godly leadership should be transformational. Our relationship with our Creator resulted in the transformation of our body, soul, and spirit. This same character of transformation should exist in the exercise of our authority. Jesus had authority yet he was humble. His leadership to the disciples demonstrated that humility and although it was often lost on them, the lesson of humility is clear. We need to exercise our authority with the same care and humility shown by Jesus. While this may be easier said than done, nevertheless, we cannot allow the seductiveness of power to trump our humility. We should desire to be able to express God's transformative love even during times of difficulty and duress.

Godly leadership is servant oriented and sacrificial. This word – servant – dominates the descriptors of leader in both testaments. We can choose to lead by example, working in tandem with those in our charge, or we can default to demanding those who we lead to do as we say, when we say. Both will work, but only one will be

[152] Bell, "Biblical Theology": 390.

godly. Leadership requires a certain amount of courage, creativity, honesty, and sacrifice.[153]

An applied theology of Christian leadership will have all of these components - the relational, transformative, servant-oriented, and sacrificial working in tandem with the place and the people we are called to lead. None of this easy, none of this is guaranteed to work every time. But all of this will result in a pastor-leader formed, informed, and led by the Spirit of the living and loving God.

[153] Ibid, 392.

Psycho-Social:

How do perceived gender differences impact our interactions and overall style of leadership with both our staff and volunteers, and do these gender perceptions create unique challenges in maintaining pastoral authenticity and authority?

When I developed this research question, I thought that discussing gender differences in leadership styles would be sufficient, but I was wrong. As I did my research, conducted my interviews, and wrote the guide that became the basis for my four workshop modules, I discovered that I need to speak to more than just gender. What really lies behind many issues in perceived leadership styles, both good and bad, are biases – both conscious and unconscious. There are so many areas of bias including gender, generational, cultural, race, disability, economic, political, etc. To discuss all of these would require an entire separate dissertation. Given that fact, I chose to focus on three major forms of bias: gender, generational, and cultural and their impact on leadership within the church. I selected these three because they are so interwoven with each other that at times, it is challenging to tease out which bias is affecting our thoughts and actions.

The formation of bias is complex and is often a product of social, personal, and cultural interactions throughout our life. Bias, both conscious and unconscious, is not just a lofty ideal spoken about and researched within academia, but it is something that is part of our everyday lives. All of these different aspects of bias form a tapestry of sorts that subtly shapes our opinions, leading to stereotyping across a variety of sectors. Recognizing our own biases, or that of others, is a challenging endeavor. But with many difficult things, getting the conversation started is a good first step.[154]

[154] Jim Woods, *Unseen: Unmasking Bias and Embracing Diversity in Our Daily Lives* (Anderson Mueller Publishing, 2023), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 3, page 29.

With that said, I want to be clear that I understand that I am a white, professional woman and thus possess my own, unintended, and/or unconscious biases that have probably influenced my research. Given the broad nature of the twenty-first century definition of gender and my previously stated understanding of my own bias, in the discussion on gender bias, I have focused only on those differences as understood in literature that may exist between men and women. To add to my own understanding and to be helpful to others, I will also explore the womanist viewpoint on gender differences and how it impacts their leadership in the church. We will begin with examining gender bias, then move into generational and cultural biases as well as some crossover. I will look into how these biases can impede our interactions as the pastor-leader both with staff and volunteers as well as how we may learn to overcome the same.

Gender Bias in Church and the Implications for Leadership

As I sat down to write on this topic, I remembered recently reading an article in which the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) removed Saddleback Church, founded by Rick Warren, for ordaining women into positions of leadership.[155] I also recalled a comment made in the focus group I conducted. When asked about gender perceptions in leadership capability, one of the women pastors responded that she could not believe we still have to talk about this in the twenty-first century. The question used to be, "Should women be pastors?" but now the question is, "How can we improve the environment and the existing biases so that women pastors can fulfill their call and feel equally

[155] Kate Shellnutt, "Southern Baptists Reject Rick Warren's Saddleback Appeal," *Christianity Today,* June 2023, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2023/june/saddleback-sbc-women-pastors-appeal-rick-warren-southern-ba.html?utm_medium=widgetsocial (accessed June, 24, 2023).

supported?"[156] And while I agree that we should have moved beyond gender, the reality remains that we have not. The perception of how men and women handle, or should handle, leadership within the church colors our thinking and can impact our interactions in areas of church leadership.

I believe that men and women are called equally by God to positions of leadership within the Church universal. But each of us have different gifts, one of which is our gender. How gender has been treated within the Church may impact how we have been trained to use our gifts. Furthermore, perceptions of gender differences (real or imagined) may create challenges for leaders on both sides of the gender divide. Understanding these differences and making good use of our unique gifts can assist pastors in managing the administrative tasks that are an important part of their pastoral duties. Valencia Ray, in her book *Leadership Beyond Gender,* states that gender stereotypes are "not only descriptive, but they are also prescriptive, that is, we think members should behave in these ways."[157] The bias from stereotyping impacts both men and women, in their everyday lives and in their roles as pastor-leaders. These perceptions can be seen in the actions and speech of men and women, i.e., how women and men perceive what is appropriate from a societal standpoint and sadly, how women and men perceive how they are expected to act in a given context. What is surprising is that much of society in general, while agreeing that men and women may have different approaches to

[156] A.J. Willingham, "More women are aiming to become church leaders. Together, they could change American Christianity," CNN, July 30, 2023, https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/30/us/women-church-leadership-united-states-cec/index.html (accessed July 31, 2023).

[157] Valencia Ray, M.D., *Leadership Beyond Gender* (Naperville, IL: Empower Up Publishing, 2013), Kindle Electronic Edition, Loc. 317.

leadership, say neither one has an approach that is necessarily better than the other.[158] Unfortunately, clergy is an occupation where gender bias still exists and has been somewhat slower in recognizing and addressing the same.

Carol E. Becker, in her book *Leading Women*, says that good leadership must have two aspects - servanthood and authority - and the biggest barrier for women in integrating these two aspects is the fact that they/we are "prisoners of our culture."[159] While we, as women, may desire to blame men, we are often guilty of buying into the paradigm of men as leaders and women as followers. And because the reality of gender bias is alive and well, this paradigm becomes a subtle message that we unconsciously incorporate from an early age. We are told that the biological differences between males and females somehow translates into our specific abilities in many areas including subject areas in school, how we should speak and dress, and even the toys with which we are given to play.[160] And these messages often are so deeply embedded that both men and women find it difficult to shift their thinking as it can be startling to discover that our gender biases are wrong.[161]

To compound the problem, when women find themselves in positions of leadership, they often defer to their male counterparts simply because of that unconscious

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[158] Juliana M. Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Kim Parker, "Views on leadership traits and competencies and how they intersect with gender," *Pew Research Center*, September 2018, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/09/20/2-views-on-leadership-traits-and-competencies-and-how-they-intersect-with-gender/ (accessed May 20, 2023).

[159] Carol E. Becker, *Leading Women* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 21.

[160] Amy Jackson, "Overcoming Gender Bias," *Christianity Today*, October 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/women-leaders/2016/october/overcoming-gender-bias.html (accessed May 20, 2023).

[161] Ibid.

but deeply rooted bias. They tend to equate the male style of leadership with success and yet when they try to emulate those characteristics that they believe are equated with success, they are labeled as aggressive and brash. This emulation of the male paradigm runs counter to how women are enculturated to speak. Women's style of speaking can be seen as more tentative and they may hedge their approach by using questions rather than directives which can express uncertainty.[162]

This can manifest itself when men and women are in a group setting discussing issues or problems that need solving. How these two genders view and act on problem-solving can be quite different. Quite often, men tend to look at a given set of problems or issues and quickly zero in on a solution. Women tend to mull over the possibilities, looking for a solution in a more holistic fashion.[163] Because of this, women can be seen as hesitant, tentative, or unwilling to commit when in fact, it is often how they have been trained to problem-solve.

One solution to this dilemma is for each gender to recognize their instinctive leadership style, regardless of associated gender stereotype. While there are many differing types, the author of *She Thinks Like a Boss: Leadership* suggests five that are representative for both men and women and includes suggestions to enhance that particular trait.

The first style she refers to is the "Hands Off" Leader. This individual is likely to empower others and is the opposite of a micro-manager. The good news is that this

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[162] Amy Jackson, "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," *Christianity Today,* August, 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/blessings-and-burdens-for-women-leaders.html (accessed April 20, 2022).

[163] Jemma Roedel, *She Thinks Like A Boss: Leadership* (Self-Published, May 2021), Kindle Electronic Version, Chapter 3, Loc. 485.

person relies on their church staff or volunteers to get much of the needed work done. The bad news is sometimes people need more direction and feedback but may be reluctant to approach this type of leader. Awareness of this can assist this leadership style by not making assumptions about what was assigned and instead make time for more frequent check-ins.[164]

The second style is the "Controlling" Leader. This person struggles to delegate tasks and is often thought of as a micro-manager. To counteract this tendency, it can be helpful to establish clear guidelines, including time and quality of work. Sometimes in a small church environment, the pastor is expected to be the one to know everything, but that is not a realistic expectation. If you are a controlling leader, you can easily fall victim to taking on too much work and creating a situation where you are not creating healthy boundaries. While both men and women can be this type of leader, it often is seen in women pastors as they can overcompensate for their perceived gender shortcomings.[165] I suffered from this myself before taking a break from business to obtain my MBA. I was fortunate to be able to see this in myself and learn the danger it presented.

The third type is the "By the Book" Leader. This leadership type is often found in very controlled settings where the goal is to have everyone operating according to policy and procedure such that the outcomes are similar. Normally, this does not work well within a church environment as flexibility and creativity are often needed to meet the

[164] Ibid, Loc. 514.

[165] Ibid, Loc. 529-537.

varying needs of the congregation while maintaining focus on the mission and vision of the church. This style is more prominent in men than in women.[166]

The fourth style is the "Transformative" Leader. This leadership style is often needed and found during times of transition. Given the changing nature of the church in the twenty-first century, many churches need this type of leadership. Both men and women can be this type of leader but it may require them to be pushed outside of their comfort zones.[167]

The fifth and final style is the "Collaborative" Leader. This leadership style desires to have all voices heard and often seeks out the opinions of others before making a decision. This can be quite helpful in a church environment but can slow down the decision process. This leader will need to remember that sometimes quick decisions need to be made and have confidence in their ability and authority to do the same. This style is more prominent in women.[168] Unfortunately for women, this style can be perceived as a weakness as women can be pigeon-holed as indecisive, a byproduct of gender bias.

Understanding your own leadership style, and those with whom you work, can assist you in developing traits to enhance or counter your natural or enculturated tendencies. Caution is warranted here as we can too easily stereotype a person based on their style and attribute it all to gender when it could be a factor of culture and/or background.

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[166] Ibid, Loc. 537-544.

[167] Ibid, Loc. 544-552.

[168] Ibid, Loc. 552-561.

Along with implicit biases in communication and leadership styles, is the implicit and often explicit bias of clothing styles by gender. The choice of clothing is a unique problem that clergy women face. Amy Jackson, in her article "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," states this:

> Consider, for instance, the dilemma women face as they choose what to wear to lead, speak, or otherwise minister. Women must choose something that fits comfortably, that's appropriate for their role, that's mindful of the culture of the church and occasion, that's not too revealing or loud, and that reflects their personality or style. It can be difficult to find a single outfit that fits all the requirements.[169]

Men often do not understand nor face this same scrutiny, but the implicit bias around a women's form and the clothing they wear is part of our Western culture.[170] I have experienced this myself when leading in church. It is not unusual for me to receive comments on my sermon, but many women will also comment on what I am wearing on any given Sunday. Surprisingly, it is often women that perpetuate the bias. While I have received compliments on my overall appearance from the men in our congregation, those compliments have been very general and never about my wardrobe. In many churches, men and women wear robes or albs as standard attire, a sign of their ordination vows and calling, and this helps to circumvent the problem. But in less formal churches and many non-denominational churches, robes/albs are artifacts that many church leaders have chosen to eliminate in order to attract a different generation to the church and not appear too traditional. This is likely to remain a frustration for women clergy as there is no easy

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[169] Jackson, "Blessings," *Christianity Today,* August, 2016.

[170] Joy-Elizabeth Lawrence, "Why Do People Only Notice My Clothes?" *Christianity Today,* August, 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/women-leaders/2015/september/why-do-people-only-notice-my-clothes.html (accessed June 3, 2023).

answer to this portion of gender bias. It will take time for this bias of clothing to dissipate as more and more women hold leadership roles within the church, and particularly within larger churches where their male counterparts have dominated.

Due to the male hierarchy that has existed in leadership within the church, women in the role of pastor-leader often receive mixed messages – both from fellow clergy and their congregations. Many mainline denominations have worked diligently at making their theological language and actions inclusive and this has helped women who are pastor-leaders, but women are still in the minority and as such, often feel invisible.[171] Sometimes, the reaction to this feeling is to overcompensate by working harder and becoming more educated in an attempt to prove that they (we) are equal to their (our) male counterparts. This is an expectation women place on themselves. God already sees us as equal but we struggle to view ourselves as God views us. This requires us to accept that we live in the tension of the "already but not yet" understanding that God's Kingdom is not yet perfected, and this gender bias will continue to be a struggle for some time to come.

This feeling of invisibility can be countered in several ways. One way is to gather with other women in an environment where there is no hierarchy. This can allow women to express themselves without feeling judged and safely share their own successes and failures in ministry.[172] A better way is to stop buying into the existing paradigm that assumes men make better leaders. Both men and women can be good leaders – in

[171] Becker, *Leading Women,* 97.

[172] Jackson, "Overcoming Gender Bias," *Christianity Today,* October 2016.

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business and in church. This paradigm comes from fear - fear of change, fear of failure, and fear often related to "imposter syndrome."

Imposter syndrome is an insidious way of thinking about ourselves that downplays our skills, education, and proven abilities and instead tells us we are a fraud.[173] Both men and women can suffer from this syndrome, but it is more predominant in women who are in leadership roles, and this includes leadership roles in the church.[174] Gill Corkindale, in his article "Overcoming Imposter Syndrome," suggests the following ways to combat these thoughts and feelings:

> • Recognize imposter feelings when they emerge. The first step towards change is awareness so be open to recognizing these thoughts as they emerge and what may be causing you to feel this way.
>
> • Rewrite your mental programs. Positive self-affirmations can help you remind you that you are competent and while you may not know everything, you are on the road to learning each and every day.
>
> • Talk about your feelings. You are not alone in feeling like an imposter. Be bold enough to speak openly to those you trust and you will likely find others who feel as you do. This opens the door to discussing and rethinking negative opinions of yourself.
>
> • Consider the context. Almost every person will have moments when they do not feel either confident or competent. Occasional self-doubt is normal. When you catch yourself thinking that you are "out of your league," reframe it: "The fact that I feel this way does not make it true."
>
> • Reframe failure as a learning opportunity. Some of the best lessons come from failures. It is okay to fail so use it as a learning opportunity.
>
> • Be kind to yourself. Remember that everyone makes mistakes occasionally and forgive yourself when you do. Conversely, when you get it right, reward yourself.

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[173] Roedel, *She Thinks Like A Boss,* Chapter 3, Loc. 779.

[174] Ibid, Loc. 787.

> • Seek support. Sometimes you may need professional help to recognize that and name that you feel like an imposter. Professionals can provide a good reality check and help you talk things through.
>
> • Visualize your success. Keep your eye on the goal – completing the task or making the presentation - which will keep you focused and calm.[175]

Imposter syndrome is real and can add to that feeling of bias, but this is often one that you, as a pastor-leader, generate within yourself thus you must be willing to acknowledge and work to stop this type of thinking. There is enough bias without you creating more.

Both men and women can face gender bias, but the fact remains that it is a greater issue for women than for men, both in our society and in our churches. With this said, there are women clergy that view their gender as an advantage as they are allowed, and maybe even expected, to be in touch with their emotions, whereas men are often taught and expected to be more stoic and restrained.[176] To explore the gender bias more deeply, let's briefly look at this issue from a womanist viewpoint who, as Black clergywomen, face both gender bias and racial bias.

A Womanist View of Gender Bias

As a white woman, I cannot possibly know what Black women in ministry experience in terms of a number of different biases, but I cannot ignore it either. And while white clergy women are slowly making inroads into church leadership, the path for Black women has been slower. Christine Rudolph, in her dissertation on this topic, stated that although women account for well over fifty percent of Black church membership,

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[175] Gill Corkindale, "Overcoming Imposter Syndrome," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2008, https://hbr.org/2008/05/overcoming-imposter-syndrome (accessed May 20, 2023).

[176] Kimberly Neims Smarr, Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, and Amy Cooper Hakim, "Gender and Race in Ministry Leadership: Experiences of Black Clergywomen," *Religions* 9, no. 12: 377, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9120377 (accessed June 30, 2023).

only ten percent hold leadership roles in their church and a mere one percent hold the role of senior pastor.[177] In another research article on this subject, the authors stated that Black women are the very backbone of any predominately Black church. They are the ones to volunteer, to be responsible for committee work, who tithe regularly, yet they are often relegated to an auxiliary role.[178]

The gender bias faced by these women comes from both white and Black males but sadly, is primarily a factor perpetuated by Black clergymen who still hold onto old stereotypes of leadership capability.[179] Furthermore, while gains have been made in leadership roles for women and the feminist viewpoint has gained strength, this has largely been centered on white women. The voices and struggles of Black women have been muffled. The work and aim of Womanist theology is to provide a voice to the unique experiences and struggles faced by women of color.[180] Yolanda Pierce, in her book *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit,* explains this beautifully. She says this:

> Womanist theology, with its explicit concern about the lives of Black women, speaks for those who make up two-thirds or more of the laity in the Black church, in which the leadership is unquestionably male. It is critical that Black women share, write, and process their own stories and those of their forebearers and ancestors. Otherwise, when others attempt to explain their stories, usually relying upon unfounded stereotypes, a certain violence is reenacted upon Black women's lives.[181]

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[177] Christine R. Rudolph, "A Different Perspective: Examining Obstacles Faced By Black Clergywomen Through The Lenses of Critical Race Feminism," *Journal of Value-based Leadership,* Manuscript 1454, 2023, https://scholar.valpo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1454&context=jvbl/ (accessed June 27, 2023).

[178] Smarr, Disbennett-Lee, and Hakim, "Gender and Race": 377.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Yolanda Pierce, *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit* (Minneapolis: Broadleaf Books, 2021), 27.

Gender bias crosses the boundaries of race and while the voices of Black clergywomen are speaking out against all bias with Womanist theology, it still requires those who continue to demean the leadership capabilities of women, and Black men in particular, to be willing to listen. Theologian Mitzi J. Smith argues that stereotypes (biases) are another convenient way to treat people in discriminatory manners based upon some assumed negative difference.[182]

In a previous cited article titled, "Gender and Race in Ministry Leadership: Experiences of Black Clergywomen," the authors cited the following solutions from the Black clergy women they had interviewed, "There are nine recommendations that evolved: support of male leadership, clergywomen mentors, a positive image towards women in ministry, educational classes, prayer, respect the call, speak up, understand God's call, and unity."[183] While there are no easy solutions for either the racial or gender bias that impact Black clergywomen more than their white counterparts, this list is a good start.

Stephanie Mitchem, in her article "Womanist Theology: Looking to the Future," states that Katie Cannon, a co-founder of Womanist Theology, argued that the importance of the Womanist Theory was its unique ability to articulate the problems that arise for women of color. These problems include, but are not limited to, racism,

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[182] Mitzi J. Smith, *Womanist Sass and Talk Back* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 21.

[183] Smarr, Disbennett-Lee, and Hakim, "Gender and Race": 377.

classism, and sexism. This theology challenges the old paradigms and begins a new conversation on the position of Black women as church leaders.[184]

To conclude this discussion on gender bias from a variety of viewpoints, I would like to share this quote from a blog magazine authored by Graham Joseph Hill:

> We need to guide men and women toward honoring, respecting, and relating to each other as equal partners and coheirs with Christ, and the church can do this well by helping both men and women become disciples who imitate Jesus Christ… Healthy personal identity grows when we focus on discipleship and conformity to Christ. And when we focus on this kind of discipleship, we also foster healthy relationships between the sexes.[185]

Generational Bias and Its Implications for Leadership

If you belong to any church within the Western hemisphere and likely the world, you have heard and probably read about how the various generations have differing approaches to just about everything in church, including but not limited to worship style, leadership, programs offered, and in person attendance. While this has been true for years, it became glaringly apparent during the pandemic. From one moment to the next, church leaders who were either part of the Boomer generation, those born between 1945 and 1960, or Generation X, those born between 1960 and 1980, may have found themselves struggling to quickly learn and incorporate the use of technology into all aspects of church. Whether it was adopting a livestream platform or learning to use Zoom, many of us in these generational categories found ourselves leaning on the technological savvy of Millennials, those born between 1980 and 2000, or Generation Z,

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[184] Stephanie Y. Mitchem, "Womanist Theology: Looking to the Future," *New Theology Review*, vol. 21 (February 2008): 56.

[185] Graham Joseph Hill, "Let's Stop Talking about Masculinity and Start Talking about Discipleship," January 8, 2020, https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/mutuality-blog-magazine/lets-stop-talking-about-masculinity-and-start-talking/.

those born after 2000. The adoption of these technologies, while not new to the younger generations, was in many cases, newer to the older generations. The irony in these situations was not lost on many of us as we realized just how much we needed the younger generation and just how much we had neglected the same. I bring this up to point out that events that form us are often generational in nature. Each generation has experiences that become part of their common identity. For example, the generations that lived through World Wars I and II or who came of age during the Great Depression, will have thoughts and experiences that are uniquely their own.[186] Compare this to the generations that grew up with everything technological. Both have unique experiences that were formative for their generation as is true for every generation. And because this is true, generational bias is a door that swings both ways and all generations can benefit from recognizing this fact.[187]

Generational bias exists within church leadership as much as it does within the workplace. In the case of church, not unlike the secular workplace, the older generation pastor-leaders are likely to have had longer terms of service within a given church. In the secular workplace, it is far more common to find Boomers who have had only four to six jobs their entire working life.[188] Contrast this with Millennials whose typical job stay is

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[186] Robert J. Schreiter, "Theology in the Congregation: Discovering and Doing," *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, edited by Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007), 32.

[187] Julie Rafferty, "The Generational Gap that is Killing the Church," *Presbyterian Outlook,* August 22, 2022, https://pres-outlook.org/2021/01/the-generational-gap-that-is-killing-the-church/ (accessed September 2023).

[188] Unknown, *Leadership on Point Managing through the Generational Divide* (Ifra Publication, 2023), Kindle Electronic Version, Chapter 8, Loc. 530.

less than three years.[189] While it appears that younger pastors are not "job-hopping" as much as their secular equivalents, the fact remains that those in church leadership seem to carry a bias in how the older thinks of the younger and vice versa.

This bias, whether conscious or unconscious, presents itself in various aspects of administrative leadership, i.e., staff hiring and management, conflict resolution, and the necessary work of the volunteers within the church. While we may think we are open and without bias in these areas, I would suggest that we rethink that. Just within my own church, I have been privy to conversations from our younger volunteer leaders about how the older volunteers are unwilling to adapt to changes in technology, or be open to new ideas of what church is called to look like in the twenty-first century. Conversely, the older staff/volunteers are frustrated with the perceived lack of respect of what it took to build the church, and the loss of the "fundamentals" of worship. Even the formality or lack thereof of in how we dress is seen as an issue.[190]

As we think about issues of hiring, we need to ask ourselves these questions. Are we biased by assuming the younger generation just doesn't know enough, have enough experience, or will stay in the job? And are we biased because we assume the older generational is too staid, too old-school, and unwilling or unable to pastor or work in a church environment that must change and adapt to be relevant? Do we put the people

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[189] Luciana Paulise, "Why Millennials And Gen-Z Are Leading The Great Resignation Trend," *Forbes.com*, October 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/lucianapaulise/2021/10/26/why-millennials-and-gen-z-are-leading-the-great-resignation-trend/?sh=7006336e44fe (accessed July, 7 2023).

[190] Karl Vaters, "We Can Whine About the New Generation or Worship with Them – But we Can't Do Both," *Christianity Today,* February 2017, https://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2017/february/whine-new-generation-worship-cant-do-both.html (accessed July 24, 2023).

who work for us and with us in categories based on their generation? Do we assume Boomers are stubborn and unwilling to change, GenXers are skeptics and question everything, Millennials are job-hoppers and self-absorbed, and GenZers are fragile?

Because we are human, we may fall victim to these stereotypical biases, but they are not helpful and I would even say harmful. Perhaps we are missing a critical piece and that is what the stories in scripture tell us. Paul, in his second letter to the church at Corinth, was concerned about divisiveness within the body of Christ. And while he was not necessarily addressing generational issues, we can learn how our "worldly" viewpoints impact how we think of others in terms of our own biases:

> So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-19).

We, as pastor-leaders, can benefit from a willingness to learn from all of the generations that may be part of our congregation and community. As pastor-leaders tackle the rapid rate of change in our society, neither bias against the older generation (ageism) nor bias against the younger generation will provide a healthy base from which any church can grow and adapt. Encouraging people from all different generations to respect and embrace each other likely will lead to strengthened relationships. And if we are honest about the reasons behind generational discord, the truth is that neither the younger or older congregants want to give up on their desired style of worship, ideas of

how the church should be led into the future versus how it was lead in the past, and other generational issues.[191]

Additionally, management techniques that may have worked in the past may need to become more flexible, i.e., the ability to work off-site, the use of technology to accomplish tasks previously done by hand, and the use of outsourcing just to name a few. Pastor- leaders must align themselves with whatever the future holds without necessarily discarding generational wisdom. We must balance on a fulcrum of the best of the old and the best of the new.

This often presents itself in how conflict emerges and is handled. Older generations may feel resentment at the rate of change but not express it outright. Younger generations may feel frustrated by this simmering passivity. Those who hold more traditional views may be offended by the perceived lack of formality of those who hold more current views. The pastor-leader has to learn how to build bridges to overcome these divides, and one way is to create a safe atmosphere in which all parties can be heard and respected. While this may sound easy, putting this into practice is a real challenge. Chip Conley, in his book *Wisdom at Work: The Making of a Modern Elder,* explain its thusly:

> The unprecedented age diversity in the workplace can be confusing as we may have drastically different value systems and work systems at play. But it can be a wellspring of opportunity that the world has never experience. When generations were siloed, both older and younger workers were like hermitically sealed containers with their wisdom trapped inside, but breaking down these walls, there is just so much we can learn from one another.[192]

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[191] Ibid.

[192] Chip Conley, *Wisdom at Work: The Making of a Modern Elder* (New York: Currency, 2018), 10.

Furthermore, in an article in *Christianity Today* by Wayne Jacobsen titled, "Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict," Jacobsen says this about generational conflict:

> These barriers are not insurmountable. Joel envisioned a community where the visions of the sons and daughters would fit side by side with the dreams of old men. His prophecy pictures a community able to draw on the wealth of God in each individual. The idealism of youth can be tempered by the wisdom of experience; and the routine of tradition can be energized by the exuberance of youth.[193]

Jacobsen recommends that the ability to respect and understand these differences can be a good step toward diffusing generational conflict. We need to harness the ability to see the issue(s) from another's perspective and respect both points of view.[194] I would add that adopting an attitude of humility will help us in our willingness to see both sides of any issue.

Pastor-leaders are called to a challenging job in exciting, but changing, times. They have to learn to navigate a system that is ripe with this generational bias issue. Ignoring it and hoping it will "die off" is not the solution as new generations will continue to emerge and new challenges will present themselves. We all must learn to accept people where they are in life - young, old, and everything in between. The Kingdom of God is for all people at all times in all generations. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge that we all carry a certain bias with respect to generations, and maybe in the acknowledgement, we can find a new path forward.

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[193] Wayne Jacobsen, "Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict," *Christianity Today*, July 1983, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1983/summer/83l3034.html/ (accessed July 25, 2023).

[194] Ibid.

Cultural Bias and Its Implications for Leadership

The topic of culture is complex and often misunderstood. We often confuse race and ethnicity with culture. While they are often components within culture, culture itself is better understood as a society or social group's distinctive way of living combined with practices and belief systems that are normative for members of a given culture.[195] Quite often, cultures develop within differing geographies and tend to be somewhat homogeneous. Large cultural groups may speak different languages, have distinct ways of life, and ways of expressing emotions. Even how a culture values things of beauty can be different between cultures.[196] How we practice our Christian faith and even how we think of our work and lives can be subject to cultural influences. For example, Western culture tends toward an individualistic nature whereas some other cultures are better described as possessing a more collectivist nature. In a blog post by Regina Kim, "Is Collectivism Better than Individualism in Promoting Constructive Conflict Management?" she states, "Cross-cultural studies on conflict management styles indicate that **a competing style** is most widely favored by members of **individualistic cultures (i.e., the United States)** and **an avoiding style** is most widely preferred by members of **collectivistic cultures (i.e., China)**."[197] Managing staff and volunteers within the

[195] Michael Jindra, "Culture Matters: Diversity in the United States and Its Implications," *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, edited by Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007), 64.

[196] Ibid, 66.

[197] Regina Kim, "Is Collectivism Better than Individualism in Promoting Constructive Conflict Management?," *The Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution,* https://icccr.tc.columbia.edu/ (accessed July 29, 2023).

mixing pot of American society requires a understanding of the nature and development of culture.

Culture is never a simple or static thing. As societies evolve and change, their cultural practices can also change. We see this very distinctively with the speed of technological advancements. Technology has created a more connected, mobile society that crosses over cultural boundaries and norms. All institutions have been impacted by this and the church is no different. We witnessed this when the pandemic hit and churches who had not utilized certain aspects of technology were suddenly forced to become adept at livestreaming, recording and posting, and the use of platforms like Zoom.

Churches often have a culture that is unique and linked together by common geography, common beliefs, and ecclesial practices inherent within a given denomination. Churches, while shaped by their theological tradition, also incorporate their larger, secular culture into their ways of interacting with another.[198] It would be common to find those who gather together as a congregation to share common social and cultural heritage, as well as education achievement, occupational status, and of course geography.[199] Subcultures may exist within a given congregation based on age, perhaps ethnicity, length of time within a given congregation, size, and the congregation's own history[200].

[198] Nancy T. Ammerman, "Culture and Identity in the Congregation," *Studying Congregations*, edited by Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 79.

[199] Ibid, 80.

[200] Ibid, 81.

It is incumbent on a pastor-leader to be aware of the cultural identity of their congregation and that of the area within which the church is located. This is particularly true if the pastor-leader is new to the congregation. I say this because within all of these cultural differences and nuances comes the danger of bias, conscious or unconscious. As the pastor-leader, you must become conscious and aware that bias can and does exist. While you may feel your church is homogeneous to the point that cultural sensitivity is not an issue, our society is changing at a rapid pace and cultural diversity is present in most American cities. Understanding the cultural nuances will better equip you in utilizing a culturally sensitive approach.

You, and your church, may think that you are open and welcoming to those outside of your church cultural norms, but are you? If the larger community within which your church is located has cultural diversity, have you made an effort to understand that diversity and to train your leadership in that understanding? It is normal to be comfortable around those who are like you, but unconscious bias can be a roadblock for you as a pastor-leader and for those you lead. So how does working to have this cultural understanding and awareness of bias improve a pastor-leader's administrative skill set?

In the arena of administration, pastor-leaders are often charged with hiring, training, and managing both paid staff and volunteer leaders. Frankly, it is natural and easy to seek out people like yourself. While you may not be conscious of this, look around at your current staff and volunteers. If they all look like you and have the same or similar cultural backgrounds, you may be a victim of your own unconscious bias. Cultural bias, not unlike other biases, can be silent and maybe unseen, but it subtly impacts our decision-making processes in the hiring and selection of paid staff as well as

the selection of volunteer leaders. In the workplace and in churches, those charged with hiring may unknowingly select candidates that seem to fit the social status quo, whether this is in terms of culture, gender, or age.[201] This unconscious bias can result in a lack of cultural diversity in your staff which can seep into the culture of the congregation. When this happens, both you, as a pastor-leader, and the congregation could be missing out on the richness that having cultural diversity brings to any organization, including church.

This can also present a roadblock when it comes to resolving conflicts. Different cultures approach conflict in different ways. If you, as the pastor-leader, are leading a church within a diverse community and you have that representation within your staff, volunteers, and congregation, then understanding the dynamics of how various cultures handle conflict is a critical piece. This is not to say this is easy. It is not. It will require you, as the pastor-leader, to take the initiative to seek out training and resources to assist you in understanding the dynamics and nuances.

So how do we, as pastor-leaders, develop the courage to embrace cultural diversity that may exist within our community? There are many reports available to churches that can provide a snapshot of the demographics of a given community. My home church has utilized an on-line tool available called *MissionInsite,* available through ACS Technologies, that can provide a wealth of demographic information that can be broad or granular depending upon the search parameters you choose.[202] Depending on the what information you desire, you can obtain very detailed reports that include the cultural makeup of your community with a certain geographical parameter that you set. This can

[201] Jim Woods, *Unseen,* Chapter 11, page 105.

[202] The website for this demographic tech is https://www.acstechnologies.com/missioninsite/.

be a good way for church leadership to examine the population attributes of their community against those same attributes within their church. Of course, information is only as good as your willingness to desire and be able to make use of the same.

One chapter in the book *This Side of Heaven* speaks to the ability and necessity of churches developing multicultural competency. The authors say this:

> Finally, we would argue that developing multicultural skills and competencies would be critical to the success of any movement within the church for multiracial or multiethnic Christianity…Consequently, the church must be more intentional in developing methods and models to increase skills and competencies within their congregations. We believe that developing multicultural competencies and multicultural skills must be approached as a lifelong learning process – a process that creates new boundaries for our communities and new relationships for the kingdom of God.[203]

I fully agree with these authors and suggest that while challenging, the rewards could be great and in keeping with the fulfillment of our greater mission to reach out and share the good news of gospel message.

None of these biases - gender, generational, or cultural, whether or not they are implicit or explicit - will improve on their own. It will most likely take work and introspection on the part of the pastor-leader and those volunteer leaders and then the willingness to do the hard work that change requires. As we close this topic on bias, I would like to briefly examine several suggested solutions to help with addressing bias.

Conclusion - Solutions for Addressing Bias

While I have only examined three types of bias – gender, generational, and cultural - the bias spectrum is broad and as pastor-leaders in God's church, we are called

[203] J. Derek McNeil and Carlos Pozzi, "Developing Multicultural Competency," *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, edited by Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007), 93.

to extend a loving presence and to speak, manage, and preach the truth of God's Word in our vocational and our personal lives. Unfortunately, we cannot avoid biases as they often develop unconsciously as part of our own inculturation in the world. But we can take steps to tackle bias both within ourselves and within our volunteer leaders and even congregations.

The first step is recognizing that you have biases. It is easier to point these out in others but often more challenging to first recognize and then acknowledge these behaviors within ourselves.[204] Awareness is examining our beliefs, thoughts, and assumptions about who we are, as pastor-leaders, and how these biases might affect how we treat others. For example, if you find yourself quick-tempered with another's inability to complete a task on time, do you make the assumption, based on some bias, that they are incapable or incompetent? If the answer is yes, then perhaps you need to pause for a moment and ask yourself these questions:

- How do I react to others from different backgrounds? Do I hold certain stereotypes based on their gender, their age, their culture or social group?
- How do my staff and volunteer leaders see me when I react a certain way, and am I willing to take feedback from them?
- Are my actions and words reflecting my true intentions?
- Am I able to empathize with others or do I default to snap judgements?[205]

A good next step would be to examine and educate yourself about bias that may be operating within yourself and your leadership team. Think about those voices that may be missing from circle and or the group paradigm that dominates. Think about searching

[204] Carmen Acton, "Are You Aware of Your Biases?" *Harvard Business Review*, February 2022, https://hbr.org/2022/02/are-you-aware-of-your-biases/.

[205] Ibid.

out training and education to help to reframe the conscious or unconscious biases that may be impacting the efficacy of your leadership and that of your team.

And finally, as you become more self-aware and willing to change and lead change, it might be helpful to seek out diverse perspectives within the ecumenical community within which you operate. These could help you see the picture from a different viewpoint and share thoughts and feelings with those who are facing the same issues. All of this will assist you, as the pastor-leader, to lean into the necessary awareness that bias exists across many dimensions and allow you to find a path forward towards embracing the beautiful diversity present in the kingdom of God.

Organizational:

In the area of secular and sacred leadership models, what models have been found to be the most helpful in developing needed administrative leadership skills and how might these two models be merged in such a way that the pastoral skill set is enhanced?

Secular theories of leadership development proliferated during the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Numerous authors have attempted to adapt these secular theories of leadership and apply them to the sacred space that is church ministry. As one begins to study all of this literature, they soon find a confusing array of opinions about what makes one a good leader and how to develop those characteristics or capabilities within a business, never mind the legitimate application for those leading the church.[206] Taking that a step further, there may be a danger in assuming that secular leadership examples should be used in the sacred setting of ministry, or that some of those theories that were popular in the twentieth century still work in the church today, particularly after the wrecking ball of the pandemic. Additionally, what outcomes are we seeking for ministry and leadership development of our pastor-leaders when we look to these leadership theories?

Part of the problem in existing theories of leadership as they apply to business is their focus on the qualities of the leader, ignoring the aspects of team members and organizational goals. Unfortunately, Christian leadership theories often fall victim to these same phenomena. And to compound this problem, congregations often have high

[206] Alice C. Stewart, "The workplace of the organised church: Theories of leadership and the Christian leader," *Culture and Religion* (December 11, 2012): 301. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14755610802535645 (accessed October 6, 2023).

and unrealistic expectations of pastors, not only as it relates to their abilities to preach, teach, and act as Christ's representative in the world, but also of their real-world managerial skills.

To understand this topic of secular and sacred models of leadership, it is helpful to examine a bit of the history of the development of leadership theory in the secular world. In this historical examination, I will be looking for both theory and application to see if there exists any quantitative or qualitative proof that the theory can be successfully adopted into practice. Next, I will examine how sacred leadership changed or adapted these secular theories to fit into the culture of church. Additionally, I will try to gauge the impact on how churches view themselves as well as the transfer of viewpoint to the expectations of their pastor-leaders. From there, I will extend the discussion to the practical aspects of administrative leadership and how we might merge some of these theories and practices such that we can enhance the overall administrative skill set of pastor-leaders.

History of Leadership Theory in the Secular World

As far back as the late 1800's, schools for learning business skills were established in the United States, with Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania being the first to offer a Bachelor of Finance degree in 1921.[207] Master of Business Administration (MBA) soon followed with Harvard, Wharton, and Stanford being several of the first to offer such specific degrees.[208] But to understand the classes and theories

[207] Bethany Garner, "What is the History of the MBA?," *Becausebusiness.com,* July 2021, https://www.mba.com/explore-programs/mba-programs/what-is-the-history-of-the-mba#:~:text=The%20world%27s%20first%20business%20school,University%20of%20Pennsylvania%20in%201881 (accessed October 2, 2023).

[208] Ibid.

that were taught that were specific to leadership and organizational development, we must first look to the social sciences.

The study of leadership theory found its origins within the sphere of social science in an area known as organizational development.[209] One pioneer, Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), was a psychologist and social scientist who emigrated from Germany to the United Stated in the 1930's. Lewin mentored and inspired most of the early professionals who came to identify themselves as practitioners of organizational development (OD).[210] Through empirical studies, Lewin developed a triangular framework that showed the impact of a democratic style of leadership and the effectiveness of the same. Gilmore Crosby, an author and expert in the study of Lewin's research as it applies to OD, believes that Lewin's democratic principles "can even decrease prejudices such as racism, sexism, and the role-based biases held in organizations, such as mistrust between management and labor."[211] Lewin's triangular framework, in his opinion, demonstrates that a more democratic style of leadership is the most effective for creating high levels of performance. The pictorial representation below can be found in Lewin's work, but was referenced by Crosby to reinforce his opinion that, "effective leadership requires the capacity to empower the people below and support the people above."[212]

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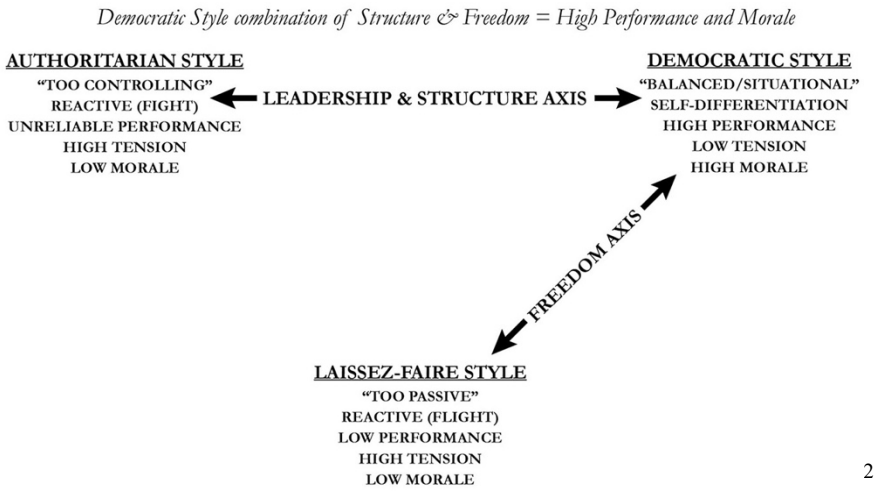
[209] Organization Development (OD) is a theory that focuses on improving the knowledge and effectiveness of people to accomplish more successful organizational change and performance. The process of OD is one of continuous evaluation from top down and bottom up.

[210] Gilmore Crosby, "Lewin's Democratic Style of Situational Leadership: A Fresh Look at a Powerful OD Model," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* (2020): 398-401, https://doi-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/10.1177/0021886320979810 (accessed October 4, 2023).

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid.



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Crosby also says this:

> New employees need leaders who will slide to the left along the "leadership and structure" axis and then gradually slide back as employees become more experienced. Highly experienced workers need leaders who will slide down the freedom axis, while being careful not to spill over into laisse-faire. Every employee and every group should be involved in an ongoing dialogue regarding the right blend of structure and freedom.[214]

The pioneering work of Lewin was the foundation for this area of OD and grew over time to include almost any area of business development theory for an organization, the leaders, and the employees.

From these beginning studies in OD, came a plethora of work that examined the dynamics of individual leaders and what made for successful leadership within an organization. One of the most prominent thinkers in the field of business management theory was the late Peter F. Drucker (1909 -2005). Drucker's long and influential career spanned an amazing 75 years. Drucker was an author, teacher, and consultant in the field

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid.

of business management and his work resulted in more than just theoretical models.[215] Drucker's ability to understand how people and business should be run has "produced modern ideas for a distinct way of being a manager based on forgotten ideals and deep-rooted moral principles."[216] Drucker understood that a business corporation was really a human organization with a basic social organization and as such, was a representation of community in addition to being an economic entity.[217] Drucker was well known for his theory of *Management by Objectives (MBO)*[218] but would be the first to warn managers that managing by utilizing objectives only works when you truly understand them. M. Rao, in his article on Drucker, said this about the man and his influence:

> The most salient leadership lessons he taught were: managing time, focusing on core competencies; following other passions to lead a complete life; differentiating between persistence and futility; reinventing constantly; focusing more on achievement than making money; emphasizing volunteerism and working for nonprofit institutions to widen mental horizons; avoiding procrastination; emphasizing excellence; learning to live in an imperfect world and making it better; working from anywhere when knowledge is portable; abandoning old practices systematically; and leaving a legacy for tomorrow.[219]

As we read this list, we can see that Peter Drucker had a depth of understanding as it related to business and life that was impactful for those who studied his work.

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[215] Marcia Kurzynski, "Peter Drucker: modern day Aristotle for the business community," *Journal of Management History* (2012): 6-23, https://doi.org/10.1108/1751134121118862 (accessed October 3, 2023).

[216] Ibid.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Management By Objectives (MBO) is a system in which a manager and their direct reports work as a team to develop areas of responsibility for each team member. This system of control then jointly develops business objectives that align with company goals.

[219] M.S. Rao, "Peter Drucker's Principles, Philosophies, and Practices," *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 14, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2021): 212+, *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A669679349/AONE?u=columbiau&sid=summon&xid=b1a74a01 (accessed October 10, 2023).

During the same time that Drucker was developing and teaching his theories, many individuals followed in his wake and specific leadership theories, focused either on a process and control method or on the individual leader, emerged. A famous statistician, W. Edward Deming, brought his practices of total quality control that had been so successful in Japan to the United States.[220] Deming became well known for his Total Quality Management (TQM) and taught these management techniques to large corporations, particularly in the automobile industry, resulting in improved manufacturing quality.[221] From these origins of TQM came specific process control techniques like Kaizen (a Japanese business philosophy that seeks continuous improvement within all aspects of manufacturing) and Six Sigma (a method designed to assist companies and provide tools to improve their business processes thereby reducing variation and defects in quality). Deming's method, and those that came from his methods, were quantifiable when applied properly and thus were less theory and more practical application. As quality improved in process control, attention shifted to the quality and capabilities of leaders within the world of business.

In the 1970's, many popular leadership theories/models were developed and focused on specific traits that researchers believed positively correlated with leadership success. The five major traits were intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability.[222] And along with this theory came both the skills approach, which

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[220] Roger Smith, "W. Edward Deming, an Influential Statistician," *Research Technology Management,* ISSN: 0895-6308, Volume 64, Issue 5, (July 2021): 58.

[221] Ibid, 58.

[222] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2016), 23.

differed from traits as skills could be learned, and the behavioral approach, which stated that successful leaders easily navigated between task behaviors and relationship behaviors.[223]

From those approaches, came more specific theories/models that were a combination of traits, situations, and behaviors. While there are many, I will discuss a few of the most popular - charismatic, transactional, transformational, and servant. All four of these theories/models came out of work within the secular realm of business, and each had pros and cons. One could argue that successful leaders, much like the democratic model sited by Lewin, demonstrated a variety of these leadership traits/skills depending on what a given situation demanded.

The charismatic leadership model founds its roots way back in the work of German sociologist, Max Weber, but was formalized as a leadership theory by management scholar Robert House. His description of this theory was quoted in a blog from Harvard Law School:

> …describes leaders who "by force of their personal abilities are capable of having profound and extraordinary effects on followers." These effects, he wrote, include "commanding loyalty and devotion" and "inspiring followers to accept and execute the will of the leader without hesitation or question or regard to one's self-interest." Charismatic leaders, House wrote, are often enlisted to "break with the established order" and to accomplish "major social change.[224]

Charismatic leaders can possess two sides to their personality. From a positive perspective, this leader desires the welfare of the group by serving the interests of the

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[223] Ibid, 71.

[224] Katie Shonk, "Charismatic Leadership: Weighing the Pros and Cons," *Daily Blog Harvard Law,* September 21, 2023, https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/leadership-skills-daily/charismatic-leadership-weighing-the-pros-and-cons/ (accessed October 9, 2023).

many and thus offering empowerment for goal achievement.[225] Conversely, the negative side can be based on a desire to dominant, become self-aggrandizing, and thus exploitive of those who are under their command.[226] Example of these types of leaders would be Sam Walton of Walmart, Jack Welch of General Electric, and former President Ronald Reagan.

A downside of this theory became apparent as this charismatic ability was dependent on a unique personality and thus not a theory that could be taught and applied by others. Some people seem to naturally possess this ability to be charismatic. Because of this, and it is often the case, that when a given theory is based upon certain behavioral aspects of given leader's personality, it becomes difficult to replicate.

The transactional and transformational leadership models posit that these characteristics are two ends of a continuum and both characteristics are needed for success. A transformational leader has the ability to articulate a clear vision for an organization but also understand the needs and motivations of the employees necessary to achieve the same.[227] A transactional leader is less concerned with the "big vision" so to speak and instead focuses on specific rewards that would motivate an individual working within a given company.[228] Transactional leadership might not work well in an environment where creativity is a necessary component, but it could work well in an

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[225] Robert J. House and Jane M. Howell, "Personality and Charismatic Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 3 (Summer 1992): 82.

[226] Ibid, 83.

[227] Stewart, "The workplace of the organised church": 304.

[228] Ibid, 304.

environment where structure and strict organizational adherence are necessary for success. For example, Deming's theories would have been transactional in nature. Additionally, when transactional is the only characteristic of leadership, it deviates from transformational because a transactional leader does not focus on the personal development and ergo the intrinsic sense of success of his or her employees.[229]

A transformational leader has the ability to articulate a clear vision for an organization but also understands the needs and motivations of the employees necessary to achieve the same.[230] This type of leader would be more open to "out of the box" thinking on the part of his or her employees if it helped the company achieve its goals. Leadership that is transformative has the ability to change the course of a company and transformative leaders are often sought out to rescue or revive a company that has lost its way. Transformative leaders understand their own strengths and weaknesses and have the ability to play to their strengths and shore up their weaknesses. With this ability, they can lead companies to greater achievement by also recognizing these traits in others and empowering them to do the same. Jeff Bezos of Amazon and Steve Jobs of Apple have often been described as having both transactional and transformational leadership qualities working in tandem.[231] Not unlike the charismatic leader, these leadership models are somewhat dependent on the behaviors of given personalities, but the behaviors themselves can be descriptors that others may be able to emulate.

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[229] Northouse, *Leadership,* 171.

[230] Stewart, "The workplace of the organised church": 304.

[231] Benmira, Sihame, and Moyosolu Agboola, "Evolution of leadership theory," *BMJ Leader* 5, no. 1 (2021): 3-5, http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/evolution-leadership-theory/docview/2552990482/se-2.

The servant leadership model was first discussed by Robert Greenleaf and this summary quote provides a good description of his theory:

> The Servant-Leader is servant first....It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead....The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed? [232]

This model of leadership is somewhat paradoxical as it seems to run counter to our everyday sense of a leader in the world of business.[233] Leaders lead and employees follow, yet in this leadership theory, the opposite seems to be true. And much like the other theories, servant leadership has characteristics and behaviors that, in theory, improve the outcomes of an organization, its employees, and society in general. The difference in the servant leadership model is that this leader puts the needs of the organization and its employees above his/her personal needs. This is thought of as a more ethical model of leadership based not on coercion or reward inducement, but rather humility and persuasion.[234] While there are examples of those who successfully deploy the key attributes of servant leaders, it can be subject to both cultural and contextual pressures that may limit its value. Examples of leaders that are thought of in this category are Fred Smith of FedEx, Harold MacDowell of TD Industries, and as a company vision, The Container Store.

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[232] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 13-14.

[233] Northouse, *Leadership,* 227.

[234] Krystin Zigan, YingFei Héliot, and Alan Le Grys, "Analyzing Leadership Attributes in Faith-Based Organizations: Idealism Versus Reality," *Journal of Business Ethics* 170 (2021): 743, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04358-7 (accessed September, 28, 2023).

This has been a brief examination of some prominent leadership theories and their possible impact on leadership success. While there have been many successful companies and leaders, the two models that have been able to be successfully replicated are the transformational leadership model and the servant leadership model. Why? Because the leaders that embodied these traits made it part of the company culture and success became defined by those same traits.

Our next section will examine these leadership theories to determine how they have been adopted by church leaders. And when adopted, which ones have been difficult to replicate in a church environment and which ones have enjoyed success. We will also try to determine why certain leadership theories work better than others in ministry.

Adoption of Secular Leadership Theories to Ministry

These first decades of the twenty-first century have continued to place pressure on churches to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of faith in America. When the pandemic struck in 2020, it exposed the need for pastor-leaders to be able to adapt quickly and supplement their normal pastoral duties with organizational and effective leadership skills. And not unlike business, churches and their leaders exist within a unique social, geographical, and cultural space. This may place additional strain on the pastor-leaders as they are called upon to navigate new territory while increasing their own abilities. In addition, each church may have its own set of unique challenges requiring the pastor-leader to be able to adopt the necessary skills or recognize that they do not have this ability and seek out expertise from outside resources.

One response to the changing landscape of ministry has been the interest in and adoption of secular theories/models of leadership to the sacred environment of Church.

Many books, seminars, and professional coaching/mentoring have sprung from this interest with the goal of improving the effectiveness of the pastor-leader and by extension, the effectiveness of local congregations.[235] And while faith-based organizations have tried to adopt many of the leadership theories/methods from the secular world, not as many have tried to analyze the effectiveness or legitimacy of transposing these same theories or methods on value-based institutions like the Church.[236] These methods, while effective with certain personalities or situations, seem to leave out the analysis of what congregations expect and how a given pastor-leader is either successful or unsuccessful at meeting those expectations. And a question to consider is what is the limit of the application of secular leadership theories/models within the context and culture of a given church? Not only this, but it is likely that a vision of what constitutes an ideal leader varies within a given congregation. To add to that complexity, how can a pastor-leader know what these expectations or ideals are? And are they even realistic or achievable given that most pastor-leaders have been trained from a theological and pastoral viewpoint rather than a pragmatic leadership viewpoint?

That being said, it is also true that the "job" of a pastor-leader is not like that of a leader in the secular world of business. The calling to be a pastor is a vocational calling from God to lead in the Church Universal such that God's Kingdom message of hope, love, grace, mercy, and salvation is carried throughout the world. Eugene Peterson, in his memoir *Pastor*, says this:

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[235] Stewart, "The workplace of the organised church": 302.

[236] Ibid, 301.

> But a vocation is not a job in that sense. I can be hired to do a job, paid a fair wage if I do it, dismissed if I don't. But I can't be fired to be a pastor for my primary responsibility is not to the people I serve but to the God I serve.[237]

Furthermore, does fidelity to the biblical models of leadership and what both leaders and followers are called to do, i.e., bringing the kingdom of God to the world, align with any of these expectations? So, with that in mind, let's examine the four leadership models previously discussed, i.e., charismatic, transformational, transactional, and servant as they apply to the work within God's Church.

The Charismatic Leader

As previously stated, charismatic leaders are those individuals that hold sway by the dynamism of their personality and as such, are considered to be extraordinary in some fashion. This sense of the extraordinary may be displayed in oratory skills as a preacher and the general excitement and enthusiasm they exude as a pastor-leader. While many pastor-leaders are gifted in many areas, those who exhibit this trait of charisma seem to have the ability to express great emotional intensity such that followers become enamored of the individual.[238] While this phenomenon exists within the institutionalized Church, it has been studied within new religious movements (NRM) that are dominated by non-denominational churches. This charismatic ability, taken to its extreme, may result in the followers believing that this individual is so "divinely" inspired that when their ordinary human fragilities reveal themselves, the followers can become

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[237] Eugene H. Peterson, *Pastor* (New York: Harper One, 2011), 165.

[238] Katie E. Corcoran and James K. Wellman Jr., "People Forget He's Human: Charismatic Leadership in Institutionalized Religion," *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 77 (2016): 309, doi:10.1093/socrel/srw049 (accessed October 13, 2023).

disenchanted. This then requires the charismatic leader to maintain legitimacy through impression management.[239]

Impression management can take a variety of forms, but it is often thought of as crafting a stage performance where church can become a theater, and the charismatic pastor-leader the lead actor. While there can be a legitimate use of a setting to engage a congregation in some aspect of a biblical story or as a setting for worship music, when it becomes a prop for a pastor-leader to maintain his/her exterior veneer of being extraordinary, trouble looms. Charisma in and of itself is not bad trait, but using charisma to advance one's own agenda or self-aggrandizement is contrary to the humility expressed by Jesus in His ministry. The apostle Paul also warns about the "super apostles" in 2 Corinthians 10 and 11 and the possible danger to the church at Corinth of their training and rhetorical abilities to preach a false message but in such a dynamic way that the church falls victim to heresy.

As we think about this particular trait of charisma as it relates to church leadership, we would should remember that scripture is replete with examples of individuals that God called into ministry who may not have possessed a charismatic personality, yet God equipped those that were called with whatever trait, skill, or behavior they needed to accomplish God's goal. In their God-given roles, they were called to influence rather than dominate which differs from the "larger-than-life" personalities of some charismatic leaders in the church today.[240] The concept of the

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[239] Ibid, 311.

[240] Eddie Gibbs, *Leadership Next: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 25.

success of the charismatic pastor-leader has lost much of its luster in the past decades as large mega-churches have seen their beloved, charismatic pastor-leaders fall from their pedestals in multiple cases of moral failure. These cases have threatened the viability of a given congregation that was dependent upon a personality.[241]

Having the ability to be charismatic may be an organic part of a pastor-leader's personality and skill set, but the strength and effectiveness of this within the sacred space of ministry has been challenged in recent years. There is more and more evidence that this high-profile, charismatic style of church leadership is not sustainable over the long term and can have damaging effects on a church when failure becomes apparent.[242] This is not to say that having this trait is negative, but it needs to be in balance with other necessary skills and those possessing this trait need to be aware of the same.

Given that the study of charismatic leadership in both the secular and sacred worlds faces the same risks and faulty outcomes and is subjectively tied to a given personality, it does not seem well-suited for overall adoption by the Church. Perhaps this trait, when complemented by one of the other three - transactional, transformational, or servant - would then be more helpful but still not likely to be easily replicated. If that is true, would the traits, skills, and/or behaviors of the transactional leader be more suited to church leadership?

The Transactional Leader

At first blush, given the definition of a transactional leader as one who is focused on structure and uses much more of a top-down approach, this does not seem like a

[241] Emily McFarlan Miller, "Misconduct allegations against Willow Creek founder Bill Hybels are credible, independent report finds," *The Washington Post*, 1 March, 2019.

[242] Gibbs, *Leadership Next,* 26-27.

leadership model that would work well in today's Church. However, with that said, churches that find themselves in chaos due to the loss of charismatic leader or some type of schism may initially benefit from having a pastor-leader that can restore order. As transactional leaders focus on providing structure for getting tasks done, sometimes this can be helpful in the work of an interim pastor.

An interim pastor is called in to act as a bridge between a pastor who has left and the new pastor who will be called. In the interim, the work of the church needs to keep happening. This can be seen as very transactional in nature but it can also cross over into transformational if the interim is tasked with helping a church who has been hurt by the actions of the departing pastor.[243]

In general, all pastor-leaders need some traits of transactional leadership in the daily work of the church, particularly in the area of administration, but to become solely transactional does not allow for innovation and creativity – two components that are needed in traditional denominations that may be experiencing a significant decline in relevancy within their community. Additionally, a pastor-leader that solely focuses on task achievement may run the risk of ignoring the important and necessary growth in spiritual vitality that every congregation needs. Transactional leadership can fall victim to task assignment and reward for task completion and become a passive monitor of the same. This model of leadership may be necessary at various times in the life-cycle of a church but should not become the predominant model if the twenty-first century Church

[243] Ian Dixon, "Interim Pastors: Preparing the Way," *Christianity Today*, Spring 1987, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1987/spring/87l2080.html (accessed July 20, 2023).

desires to build a future of thriving, spirit-filled believers who are carrying out the mission of disciple-making for the Kingdom of God.

However, a study conducted and documented by Jens Rowold, "Effects of Transactional and Transformational Leadership of Pastors," found that when the trait of transactional leadership is combined with the trait of transformational leadership that the former is augmented by the latter leading to a higher level of satisfaction.[244] Furthermore, this level of satisfaction exists both within the staff and the congregation.[245] Given these findings, let's examine the traits of transformational leadership that are helpful to pastor-leaders.

The Transformational Leader

As previously stated in our secular discussion, a transformational leader has the ability to clearly articulate a vision for an organization that can be shared by those under their employ and motivates and supports these individuals to achieve both personal and organizational goals. The pastor-leader that possesses the ability to be transformational in their leadership call seem to possess similar traits in that when they cast their vision for ministry, they can also articulate the goals/steps needed to achieve that vision, create a culture of trust, and put the needs of the ministry above their own needs.[246] In the same

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[244] Jens Rowold, "Effects of Transactional and Transformational Leadership of Pastors," *Pastoral Psychology* 56, no. 4 (March 2008): 404, http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/effects-transactional-transformational-leadership/docview/199390536/se-2 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-008-0121-6.

[245] Ibid, 407-408.

[246] Judith Corbett Carter, "Transformational Leadership and Pastoral Leader Effectiveness," *Pastoral Psychology*, 58, no. 3 (2009): 262, http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/transformational-leadership-pastoral-leader/docview/199303673/se-2.

study by Rowold, transformational leadership had a greater positive impact on both the followers (staff) and the congregation than just transactional leadership alone due to the unique ability to articulate and execute a "value-based vision."[247]

A study that attempted to measure the correlation between the trait of transformational leadership to pastoral effectiveness, found that pastor-leaders that see themselves as transformational and whose congregations concur, all have deep spiritual practices of prayer and study.[248] While we would assume that is always true, the business and busyness of running the everyday life of a church can, at times, interfere with good personal practices that enable these particular pastor-leaders to maintain a solid sense of centeredness with themselves and with God. Furthermore, while a positive correlation exists with the ability to move on a continuum between transactional and transformational, transformational leadership appears to be the most effective during times of change – either due to upheaval and crisis or growth.[249]

A good model for understanding the correlation between these two leadership traits, i.e., transactional and transformational, is the comparison to an orchestra conductor. A conductor understands all the various musical aspects of a given piece of symphonic music and has the ability to be transactional in training the orchestra to understand his or her own specific signals, scheduling sufficient rehearsals, and establishing other rules. But this same conductor also can be transformational in the

[247] Rowold, "Effects of Transactional and Transformational Leadership": 409.

[248] Carter, "Transformational Leadership": 264.

[249] Ibid, 270.

ability to bring together all these separate parts such that they become a cohesive whole and bring the conductor's vision of a musical piece to life.[250]

To finish up this discussion of specific leadership theories as they apply to ministry, we will examine the servant leadership model. Unlike the other three, this model was, to some degree, originated in the sacred sphere and then co-opted in the secular sphere. Since that time, the concept of servant leadership in the Church has broadened and deepened in its development and application.

The Servant Leader

The concept of servant leader was introduced by Robert Greenleaf in his book *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness,* written in the mid-1970s. And while Greenleaf may have coined the term as it relates to secular leadership, Jesus was and is our model for true servant leadership. Jesus turned previously held ideas of leadership on their head when he demonstrated what it meant to put others needs above your own, while maintaining both authority and integrity in leadership. I believe that is why this model of leadership is so desirable for pastor-leaders to try and emulate. However, given our human propensity towards selfishness, this model can run up against the realities of leadership. These realities are intrinsically linked to both the expectations of the pastor-leader of themselves and/or those being lead. While on the surface they may appear to be congruent, i.e., lead like Jesus and it will all turn out okay, the reality is we are not Jesus, and our own human frailties can collide with our sincere desire to be a servant leader. In a study analyzing leadership attributes in faith-

[250] W.C.H. Prentice, "Understanding Leadership," *Harvard Business Review,* https://hbr.org/2004/01/understanding-leadership (accessed July 23, 2023).

based organizations, there was a disconnect between what clergy perceived as demonstrating servant leadership and how those being led perceived the same.[251] This does not mean that the servant leadership model is flawed. It only points out that perceptions can vary depending on how a pastor-leader chooses to execute the servant model of leadership.

The benefits to this model can be tremendous, particularly when it aligns with the vision and mission of a given church. When operating well, it can create the desire of those working alongside the pastor-leader to work in harmony for the mutual benefit of their fellow workers and the church.[252] This does not mean that poor performance is accepted because the pastor-leader is seeking harmony. Actually, following in the footsteps of Jesus, the pastor-leader would refuse to accept sub-par performance, particularly when the same pastor-leader knows that the person is capable of so much more.[253] Studies have found that servant leadership, when executed correctly, can improve the performance of any organization including a church because it increases the level of mutual trust which then leads to a sense of caring and being cared for. This trust is a hallmark of the servant leader model because the traits of a servant leader are empathy, integrity, and listening.[254] This sense of genuine care and concern can result in

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[251] Zigan, Héliot, and Le Grys, “Analyzing Leadership Attributes”: 743.

[252] Kevin J. Hurt and Elliott Long, "Positional Authority and Influence in Servant Leadership: A Conceptual Model," *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership* 16, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2023), *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A733937549/AONE?u=columbiau&sid=summon&xid=eeac8a8a (accessed Oct. 26, 2023).

[253] Ibid.

[254] Ibid.

staff feeling safe when they try new things and exhibiting initiative which then results in high job satisfaction and better work performance.[255]

From a biblical perspective, it would seem that this model would be the best for pastoral ministry but all the models are somewhat dependent upon the authenticity and character of a given pastor-leader. All can be used for the good of the church and all can be twisted and used for manipulation. Of course, it is always the hope that the former is true and not the latter, but awareness of the possibility might keep us from the possibility of ill use. The importance of both authority and authenticity must be at the forefront as we move into the next and more practical discussion of how these models/traits can apply to administrative leadership.

Practical Aspects of Administrative Leadership

Certain secular leadership theories and models can be adapted to leadership in the Church but we would be remiss if we ignore the fact that this vocation, this calling, requires a different mindset when it comes to the administrative leadership of the church. These relationships are sacred ones, relationships of a covenantal nature versus strictly a work relationship. Rendle and Beaumont, in their book *When Moses Meets Aaron,* speak about the covenantal nature of our relationship with God as the foundation for our relationships with those in our congregation and with those whom we supervise.[256]

So how should this impact our relationship for those under our charge? How does this intersect with our responsibilities to be a good employer, following all the requisite legal guidelines while maintaining our authority and authenticity as a pastor-leader?

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[255] Ibid.

[256] Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007), 25.

When does the sacred, covenantal relationship surpass the employment relationship? When are they the same and when are they different?

All of these are important questions and I would like to say that the answers are always very straightforward, but they are not. In a few cases, it is easier to be more transactional in your decision-making, particularly as it applies to the initial steps of interviewing, hiring, and onboarding a new staff member. But most of the time, you will find yourself on that high-wire, balancing between being a pastor-leader in the sacred sense and a supervisor in the secular sense. The failure of a work relationship often ends in termination, but the failure of a broken covenantal relationship could end in creating a perceived wedge between you, as the supervisor, the staff or volunteer, and the unity of the relationship with God at the helm. I know that sounds frightening and in some respects, it is. But the administration of God's church done consistently, thoughtfully, and godly is possible. At times, you will triumph and at times, you will fail. But if God is at the center of your relationship with staff and volunteers, and if you are willing to acknowledge your strengths and your weaknesses and how they impact these same relationships, you will find more success than failure. How can I be so sure you may ask?

I have found myself in both positions – leading as a business woman and leading as a bi-vocational lay pastor. The more I have integrated God into the equation of both of these areas, the better a leader I have become. Scripture is replete with examples of leadership successes and failures. The Old Testament gives us examples of how the Israelites were formed into a nation under a covenant with God but led by people - people like Moses, Joshua, David, and the prophets. Some were good leaders and many were failed leaders. Looking at the models/traits previously discussed, how would we apply

them to these Old Testament leaders? The truth to me is that those models/traits were fluid in application and dependent upon the situational context in which they found themselves.

The New Testament gives us a picture of the Church under the new covenant established by Jesus. We read of the development of church offices in the book of Acts, and leadership challenges in the epistles of Paul. Within the teachings of Paul, we read of the spiritual gifts that each of us possess, graciously bestowed upon us by God in order to carry out the ministries of the church. John Tyson, in his book *Administration in the Small Membership Church,* talks about the synergy that exists between God's call to ministry, God's equipping us for ministry, and the desire to provide the gifts we need to fulfill all aspects of that call.[257] As pastor-leader, we should rely on these God-given gifts but also seek ways to inform and improve upon our knowledge of all aspects of this vocation, including administration. Does this mean we are always moving between leadership models? Maybe. But it is more likely that you have a God-given model and you will need to supplement that with other traits just like both the Old and New Testament leaders.

Part of understanding the subtle differences between sacred versus secular leadership is an examination of your motives and your natural tendencies. J. Oswald Sanders, in his book *Spiritual Leadership,* offers a chart to compare the subtle differences in leadership.[258] We could superimpose certain leadership model/traits on these:

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[257] John H. Tyson, *Administration in the Small Membership Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 6.

[258] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 38.

Natural/Secular (Charisma/Transactional)	**vs.**	**Spiritual (Transformational/Servant)**
Self-confident		Confident in God
Knows people		Knows God
Makes own decisions		Seeks to find God's will
Ambitious		Self-effacing
Originates own methods		Finds and follows God's methods
Enjoys commanding others		Delights to obey God
Motivated by personal considerations		Motivated by God's love
Independent		God-dependent
(Charisma/Transactional)[259]		**(Transformational/Servant)[260]**

We will, at times, lead from the first column, but if we can humble ourselves within our positions of authority, leaning into the lessons we find in scripture, we can learn to lead from the second column. Given that the transformational and servant models are more sustainable in ministry, we may also find more success and satisfaction.

And as discussed in the previous sections, there are various secular model/theories of leadership that you may naturally adapt in your role as a pastor-leader and others that you may find helpful to learn about and emulate. For myself, I move between being a transactional leader to a servant leader depending on the needs of a given moment. Transactional leadership skills can be helpful when creating and implementing job descriptions for staff and volunteers and in the interview and hiring process. But when you have established those early relationships and you begin to conduct one-to-one meetings with both staff and volunteers, you may find that the traits of the servant leader model serve you better.

[259] I have added this title to Oswald's characteristics to demonstrate my point.

[260] Ibid.

The same may hold true for learning the art of delegation and accountability with respect to your staff and volunteers. Again, depending on the needs of your congregation, its vision, and mission you may find yourself moving back and forth between all four models of leadership - charismatic, transactional, transformational, and servant. But caution is warranted here. Using a specific model as a form of manipulation would be counter to your vocational call and would likely backfire. Those who you lead may recognize that your actions do not match up with the covenantal nature of the relationships within your church, nor do they match what they may have come to know as your normal leadership style.

As we think about our own leadership contexts, we cannot ignore the influence of the surrounding culture. This influence presents itself in patterns of behavior that in turn, influence how we respond.[261] Whatever models or theories a pastor-leader desires to emulate must align with his or her biblical theology of leadership. This desire to lead in the way that represents the best of who are and are called to be begins and ends with the nature of God, both in how God created us, *Imago Dei*, and how God relates to us.

As previously stated in our discussion on the theology of leadership, it is helpful to remember that good leadership is multi-directional, meaning it flows in a variety of ways, and when it is working at its best, it is non-coercive.[262] This would line up with Lewin's concept of the democratic leader and while a secular concept, it can still provide an apt descriptor of how God operates in our world and thus how we, as pastor-leaders, should also operate.

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[261] Bell, "Biblical Theology": 377.

[262] Rost, *Leadership*, 102.

Our God is relational and demonstrated that relational nature in the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Given that is true, then our pastor leadership should be relational. As pastor-leaders, we are both leaders and followers. We lead those in our charge and we follow the guidance of the Spirit and the examples found in the scriptures as both reminders and exemplars of how to lead. This is where the sacred should override the secular in our approach. This is where that "fluidity" comes into play as we move between various models/traits/styles of leadership. We will, at times, and perhaps unconsciously, utilize a more transactional approach and then move to a servant approach depending on the need and circumstance.

God transforms the hearts and minds of those who have been called into a relationship with the Triune God ergo our pastoral leadership should be transformational. Our relationship with our Creator resulted in the transformation of our body, soul, and spirit. This same character of transformation should exist in the exercise of our authority. Jesus had authority yet he was a servant. His leadership to the disciples demonstrated that servant leadership, although it was often lost on them, was the nature of leadership in God's Kingdom. We need to exercise our authority with the same care and servant attitude shown by Jesus. We must be careful not to let our own desire to relate with certain traits like charisma lead us away from the humility of Jesus and towards an overblown confidence in our own abilities.

Godly leadership is servant oriented and sacrificial. And as previously stated, the term "servant" dominates the descriptors of leader in both testaments. Jesus' leadership can fit all four models discussed as His command of the scriptures and His ability to speak to people demonstrated that He possessed tremendous charisma. But Jesus was

practical as well and often His instructions to the disciples seems very transactional in nature. But the true strength of His ministry, to me, is found in His ability to demonstrate what a servant leader and a transformational leader can and should look like. After all, Jesus' version of servant leadership transformed the world, and is still transforming the world over 2000 years later.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, you, as the pastor-leader, must recognize the sacredness of your calling and the practical needs that will arise within that calling. While they are not mutually exclusive, it is likely you will need to augment your natural leadership tendency without sacrificing your authenticity and authority. This may require you to shift between a given set of leadership models/traits in order to effectively administrate the needs of your church. And as close this section, I would like to share this quote from A.C. Stewart who states this concept beautifully:

> While it is important to use God-given talents to determine ways of improving the effectiveness of the church organization, Christians must also walk humbly down this path…While Christian leaders must consider the realities of situations, the nature of persons and the complexities of the organizations, they must never forget that they claim a faith tradition which also believes that limitations can be transcended by a provident God.[263]

[263] Stewart, "The workplace of the organised church": 315.

CHAPTER 5
MINISTERIAL COMPETENCY

My site team and I agreed that I needed to continue to develop competency in the areas of preaching, worship leader along with the planning required for the same, and given the teaching elements of my project, religious educator. I was interested in all three areas and I felt that all three would enhance my ministry not just at my home church, but within the Presbytery that I serve. None of these were concerning to me from an achievement perspective, but all three required significant time in development for them to be of value to me. I also found that there was significant overlap in the development of competency in these three areas. For example, the readings I and my site team selected for religious educator and the knowledge I gained from them, wove itself into the development of my sermons as I rethought how I could effectively communicate the scripture message on any given Sunday. The same was true with developing worship as I thought through the organization of worship and how to have the readings, the music, all point to the sermon and in turn to the worship of God. All three of these work in tandem with each other but I will discuss each separately beginning with preacher.

Preacher

As I leaned into improvement in this competency, I quickly realized it will be a lifelong learning process. But as long as I continue to be open to the call of the Holy Spirit and open to learning, I believe my preaching abilities will improve. While I am created in the image of God and His beloved, I am still an imperfect human and as such,

will never reach perfection in this skill – at least not this side of heaven.

Given the myriad of strategies I and my site team agreed upon, I found that as I worked through them, I became more willing to take risks. I know from my years as a business leader, that some of my best learned lessons came when I took a risk and failed. And while I would not say I had any epic failures in my preaching, at times I felt that I missed the mark and perhaps an opportunity when I was unwilling to take a risk.

Strategy A **-** I will seek out three opportunities to preach to different congregations that represent a variety of age groups and cultural backgrounds to help develop my understanding and communication skills.

One of my first strategies was to make myself open to opportunities to preach to different congregations that represent a variety of age groups and cultural backgrounds. It made me nervous but also excited at the possibility. I had a few of those opportunities present themselves early in my work. At first, I hesitated to accept because I felt I had not yet attended the Festival of Homiletics, but I had watched several sermons on-line and attended worship in a Lutheran church so I felt I had a bit of exposure from differing sources. And frankly, I was anxious to experience preaching to these different congregations.

The first was a young, American-Taiwanese congregation whose parishioners were half my age and pastored by a young American-Taiwanese woman. They were in the process of reading and studying *The Story* which is a condensed version of the Bible that moves in a more chronological order. As such, the pastor asked me if I would preach on the pre-selected passage for that week – the story of David and Bathsheba. Admittedly, it was not the passage I would have selected, but I agreed. To better prepare,

I met with her and asked her questions about these young people. Questions about where they were in life, career, marriage, biblical knowledge, etc. This proved invaluable as I was able to then select a passage – the juridical parable told by Nathan to David – as a focus on choice and consequence. Given that many were at a point in their lives where they needed to make some decisions, I used that knowledge to discuss decision-making from a scriptural standpoint and God's willingness to love and forgive us when we are willing to ask and acknowledge the same. I felt it went well, and the pastor confirmed that after speaking to group.

The second was a yoked congregation. They were Presbyterians and Lutherans who had come together as neither congregation could support a church on their own. I chose a passage from Luke 17:11-18 – the story of the healing of the ten lepers. The pastor had told me that this congregation was struggling with the sharing of faith experiences, acceptance, and gratitude. I focused on three things in the story – what were they grateful for, what and or who were they responsible for, and what did they need healing for. The congregation gave me very positive feedback at a fellowship gathering following worship and hoped to see me back again.

In both of these cases, talking to the pastors in advance and learning about their specific congregations aided me in directing my message to the appropriate context. Knowing your audience is always critical to a successful presentation of any sort, but I believe it becomes even more important in the context of a guest preacher. In his memoir, Eugene Peterson talked about an early experience while in seminary doing field work at a Presbyterian church. He felt that the pastor's sermon engaged the congregation in a way he had never experienced. He queried the pastor about this and the pastor told him that

part of his sermon preparation was visiting and listening to his congregation about what was happening in their lives at that moment.[264] In a way, that was what I was doing without realizing it.

My third opportunity was in a completely different environment as it was not in a church or chapel but in a multi-purpose room at an assisted living and memory care facility. I spoke at length to the chaplain about the type of service, scripture passage, music etc. This audience would be much older than myself, and some, if not most, were physically impaired in some fashion or with a loved one in that condition. I needed to have a gentle approach and be mindful of the smallness of their world. I chose a passage from 2 Corinthians 6 and spoke about the passing of time and the importance of not wasting one precious moment – a concept deeply familiar to each one of them. After worship had concluded, I received many positive comments but was especially pleased to see that a weekly newsletter, written by the chaplain, had a poem that eerily paralleled my sermon and made my point that much stronger.

Strategy B - I will commit to attend the Festival of Homiletics in May of 2023.

The Festival of Homiletics was held in Minneapolis, MN, from May 15th through May 18th of 2023. I had never had an opportunity to attend before so I was excited by the potential for learning set before me. On the day of my arrival, I was able to attend both a workshop and a worship event, both of which were inspiring. Over the course of those three and one-half days of the festival, I experienced many different styles of preaching and felt pushed by the content of both the sermons and the lectures. One lecturer spoke

[264] Eugene Peterson, *The Pastor A Memoir* (New York: Harper One, 2011), 86.

about how we view God, using terms like perfect, whole, and beyond imagining. But if we are made in the image of God, *Imago Dei*, what about those whose bodies and minds fall far beyond those boundaries? Do we visualize God in a wheelchair or as an autistic person? And when we preach, are we presenting an image of God that inadvertently excludes these individuals? Perhaps we should be preaching an image of God that is more inclusive, more loving.[265] We say this in our churches but do we convey this in our messaging? Jesus preached from the margins to the marginalized, but do we? I had never thought about this before and it has stayed with me.

Another lecturer spoke about the image of the cross. How the vertical axis is the relationship between God and humanity, but the horizontal axis should represent our relationships with each other, emanating from our relationship with God.[266] I had never heard this analogy, but I found it moving and thought provoking. I look forward to a time when I can use this analogy to explore what the cross means to each of us.

While I could write volumes about the variety of styles and the richness of the spoken word, I want to share just one final thought taken from a lecturer from the Duke School of Divinity. Luke Powery spoke about the wilderness temptations of Jesus but how we often miss a critical part – "Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him." (Matthew 4:11) Angels exist in our lives and within our congregations. Unfortunately, we tend to focus on our wilderness journeys and forget about the angels – those who care for us, those we care for, and the hope that is present

[265] Lecture given by Rev. Jonathan Merritt.

[266] Ibid.

even in the wilderness because "angels came and waited on him."[267] These are words I will not soon, if ever, forget.

Strategy C - I will seek out four to six opportunities to watch and listen to other more experienced preachers of a variety of faith traditions to broaden my own awareness of preaching styles.

These opportunities came in unexpected ways and at unexpected times. I had the pleasure and delight of watching Rev. Dr. Pitts, my advisor, give his first sermon when he returned after suffering through an attack that hospitalized him and kept him out of his ministry for a while. He spoke about his experience with humor, humility, and grace. While I do not know if he had prepared notes for this sermon, he appeared to speak/preach from his heart. This one lesson stands above all the rest as I realized that I needed to trust that what the Holy Spirit is guiding me to say will be received with the work of that same Spirit – I just need to learn to trust that a bit more.

The second came during a time when our senior pastor had to take an unexpected leave of absence and I filled in for her at the ordination/installation of our new associate pastor. He had chosen a pastor to preach at his ordination that he had worked with in the Congregational Church. Having never attending a Congregational Church, I did not know what to expect but she was a marvel. She utilized story-telling as a means of preaching to the church. Her sermon, while thoughtful, was punctuated with many humorous stories that she nimbly tied to the scripture lesson.

Perhaps one unintended result of my attending the Festival of Homiletics was the availability of worship twice a day and with that, sermons from various Protestant

[267] Lecture given by Rev. Luke Powery.

traditions. I texted my senior pastor after the second day and declared I wanted to come back from the festival as a black Baptist preacher as their command of the Word and their ability to articulate their message was second to none.

Evaluation - I will ask my site team to continue to provide me with feedback after each sermon I preach to see where my growing edges may lay.

Over the course of this year, I have had numerous opportunities to preach in my church as well as other churches within our Presbytery. I experimented a bit this year with the ways I approached a given sermon. In one instance, as our church was following the Revised Common Lectionary, I was assigned a passage in Ruth. This well-known and perhaps well-worn passage was within our church so I decided to try something different. Instead of just reading the text and then giving my sermon, I used the scripture to create a script in an interview format. I recruited a member of our church to be Naomi, even dressing the part, and I acted as the interviewer. My "Naomi" entered the church as a surprise and at first the congregation was confused as to what was happening. I invited her up to the chancel and we sat together as I asked her questions and she responded from scripture but in a conversational tone. After the interview was completed and "Naomi" slowly exited, I pulled her interview together with the focus points of my sermon. Several members of my site team who were in attendance loved that I was willing to try something new and I received wonderful feedback from the congregation at large.

Another opportunity came when I had just returned from a week of vacation in Hawaii. During that week, I tried ziplining for the first time. It was an amazing experience for me and I used that experience, along with pictures of my flying down the zipline with arms over wide, as an example of the yoke of Jesus. Jesus tells us in

Matthew that His burden is easy and His yoke is light (my paraphrase). I explained to my congregation how heavy the body harness felt until they attached the yoke to the guideline and gravity allowed me to soar. The use of the visual picture of my flying through the air as a representation of the lightness of Jesus' yoke and His desire for us to experience the same, resonated with the congregation and I received wonderfully encouraging feedback.

Preaching and interpreting God's Holy Word is a sacred task. It is one that demands that the preacher understand their audience, the context of the time and place in which they preach, and how to engage their audience such that spiritual growth and/or curiosity is the result. While I still have a long way to go, I feel that my exposure to differing preaching styles as well as my willingness to take a few risks, improved the quality of my preaching this year.

As I continue this journey, I want to be a preacher that challenges, encourages, and creates a desire within congregants to understand the beauty of the scriptures and what it means to live an abundant life fully embraced and embracing all that God offers. I believe that it is a sacred task and a weighty responsibility but one that can, if done with the right intentions, bear wonderful fruit.

Worship Leader

It is not enough to have an understanding of the elements that comprise an effective worship experience. A worship leader must be able to creatively bring all of the pieces of worship (liturgy, music, sermon, prayers, and pacing) together in such a way that those who attend worship experience a communion with God. The goal of worship is to present an offering to God; an offering worthy of the grace, love, and mercy that God

extends to us every moment of every day. I want to be able to create a worship space not just on Sunday mornings but also at other places and times that enhance my role as worship leader and bring a positive and loving impact to those who attend.

Strategy A - Two of my site team members, Rev. Lissa Smith and Rev. Leanne Strommen, have offered to teach me their methods of preparation. I am scheduled with Rev. Smith for the planning of Lent through Pentecost. I will schedule with Rev. Strommen for the planning of a different liturgical season.

Strategy B - After learning from my two experts, I would like to plan several worship experiences from beginning to end.

Both Strategy A and B became combined when life gave me an opportunity to learn and grow when I least expected it. I had planned to spend time with both my senior pastor, Lissa, and pastor Leanne Strommen, both of whom are on my site team and both whom I knew and respected. But my nicely planned and scheduled time of learning jumped to the forefront when my senior pastor, Lissa, had to take an emergency leave of absence due to a family health crisis. This happened right before Lent and continued through the first part of May. This presented both a challenge and an opportunity, as I had to adapt quickly to this change and lean on others for direction and advice. I scheduled a meeting with our soon-to-be Associate Pastor so we could immediately work on services for Ash Wednesday. Fortunately, we had examples of what had been done in the past so we were able to create a similar format but added a few new elements.

We then sat down and collaborated to divide up the tasks that would need to be handled during this period of time. I reached out to a member of my site team, Rev. Strommen, for guidance on resources for worship and decided to maintain the use of the

revised common lectionary as a guide through Pentecost. Rev. Strommen's guidance and suggestions became a quick foundation for my learning. And while our soon-to-be associate pastor was trained and had just completed the process to become a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA tradition, he had not yet been ordained or installed. Fortunately, as a Commissioned Lay Pastor (Commissioned Ruling Elder), I had the ability to officiate the sacraments and moderate Session so we did not have to reach outside of our church for assistance. And within that same month, I presided over the installation and ordination of our new Associate Pastor, coordinating with all of the clergy necessary to have this event follow our Book of Order guidelines and also had the help of Rev. Strommen who was very familiar with the process.

The senior pastor's leave of absence became my crash course on everything from creating worship liturgy, managing our resource center, and working with staff in a different capacity, to leaning heavily on prayer. I believe I learned more about our church software, crafting liturgy, and pastoral care in those two months than in all the years prior. While it was an extremely difficult and challenging time for my pastor, both our Associate Pastor and I had an opportunity to work together in ways we had not in the past. Together, we discovered roadblocks that existed and worked to eliminate them, and we both came out the other side as stronger worship leaders and pastors as a result.
Strategy C - I will read a book on worship planning in the reformed tradition and/or attend a seminar on reformed worship planning.

I decided to read a book on the history of reformed worship. I chose *Worship Reformed According to Scripture* by Hughes Oliphant Old. Honestly, it was a random choice but it was an excellent book. Some of the information I had learned in my Church

History classes and Systematics at Seminary, but this book went deep into the origins, history, and specific application of reformed worship in Sabbath, praise, prayer, baptism, preaching, celebration of the Lord's Supper, tithing, and daily practices. It was a wonderful refresher on how our current reformed, American worship style evolved over many centuries.

Many parts of this book stood out, but particularly the chapter on "The Ministry of the Word." In this chapter, Old goes into depth on the development of the reformed style of preaching and given it was one of my competencies, I paid particular attention. One short paragraph on Bucer reminded me of what we do, or rather should do, we when are proclaiming God's Word. Old say this about Bucer's thoughts:

> The sermon should not be used by the preacher to display his own cleverness and ingenuity. Elaborate attempts to harmonize the apparent contradictions in scripture should be avoided. The sermon should be a witness to Christ as Lord and should make clear to Christians the path of life. [268]

As Old recounts the history of the Reformation in respect to worship, he speaks about the theology of communion. In this robust discussion, Old reminds us that partaking in communion is a reminder and affirmation of the once and forever sacrifice of Christ on the cross. We are not taking this sacrament as a sacrifice of ourselves to God, but as a reminder of the gracious gift from God.[269]

Each section of this book was a good reminder of why and how we choose to practice our reformed faith in worship. Old reminds us of the history of each of our worship practices and the traditions of the same, but also reinforces the concept that all of

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[268] Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship Reformed according to Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 74.

[269] Ibid, 127.

what we do and say should be measured against scripture.[270] Scripture is the ultimate and final authority and should be our guide and reference in developing our worship. While we may be influenced by culture and adapt to culture, we must never lose sight of where it all began.

I want to mention another unexpected but delightful opportunity to learn about creative ways to plan worship. Our Presbytery invited and compensated Dr. Marcia McFee to allow participation in a workshop seminar she offered via Zoom. Dr. McFee was so creative and offered numerous suggestions for creating an inviting worship space. She moved through the important liturgical events that are approaching including Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter to name a new. Her advice was practical and she demonstrated rather than just lectured which for me, was so very helpful. I would highly recommend her work and website *www.worshipdesignstudio.com.*

Evaluation - I will ask my site team to evaluate a worship event that I plan and provide feedback for future planning.

As stated previously, I had to learn on the fly and developed several worship experiences during the time our senior pastor was on leave. The three members of my site team who are part of our congregation and our Session gave high marks on the worship experiences. Both the new associate pastor and myself worked to created seamless worship such that our congregation would not feel anxious about the temporary absence of our senior pastor. I think this was a much better learning experience for me as I had to "just do it" and not worry and fret about it.

[270] Ibid, 163.

Religious Educator

Given that my primary goal was to create teaching materials that would either act as a reference guide for pastors untrained in the necessary administrative leadership skills or enhance said skills, it was imperative that I enhance my own skills as an educator. As I lacked any formal training in adult education in either the secular or sacred arena, my site team and I decided that a combination of specific workshop training and readings would be appropriate.

Strategy A – Take a seminar offered by the Faith+Lead Academy at Luther Seminary.

Because my site team and I had agreed upon the importance of my ability to structure and communicate somewhat secular information while maintaining the sacredness of the task, I selected and participated in a 12-hour seminar titled "Stepping Up to Supervision" presented by Rev. Susan Beaumont. This on-line seminar was offered over a three-week period, four hours per session, and was geared toward pastors who had staff supervisory responsibility. It was structured around the concept of supervision as managing performance rather than task assignment. Each section built upon the next, starting with the job description and moving through the hiring, job performance appraisal, staff discipline, and termination. Though the actual information presented was not new to me, I gained valuable insight into two specific areas.

The first was a lengthy discussion about the covenantal nature of ministry relationships that extends to staff, particularly when staff are also members of the congregation. Dr. Beaumont spent the first hour examining the differences between covenantal relationships and secular employment relationships. I found this quite helpful and a good framework to begin any training workshop that discusses the unique nature of

secular work set into a sacred space. As I stated in my proposal, in order for me to be effective as a religious educator, I need to be conscious of the tension that exists between these two spaces.

There were two additional parts of Dr. Beaumont's teaching strategy that I found helpful. The first was her use of case studies. This was familiar territory for me as it was the same methodology utilized in many of my M.B.A. classes and for me, aided in the application of new information. Her second was the use of role play, often set around the class study. I have frequently used role play in training situations with my own staff and have found that my staff felt more comfortable handling a given situation after having acted it out in a safe environment. I had already planned to use both of these training strategies in my workshop, depending on the number of attendees, so it was helpful to find that it was still relevant.

One area that I felt was missing was the lack of time to discuss what the real and optimum outcome of any given case study should be. I felt frustrated by this lack of information and thus immediately decided to include time in my workshop offerings for discussion of this nature.

Strategy B - Read *Make It Stick* by P.C. Brown, H.L. Roediger, & M.A. McDaniel, a book on the psychology of retention in teaching. Read *The Art of Teaching the Bible* by Dr. Christine E. Blair. Read *Powerful Teaching* by P.K. Agarwal and P.M. Bain, a book on the science of learning. In addition to these three books, I will also read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire.

After completing the workshop, and as I began to delve into the selected readings, I found that I kept coming back to this question of secular versus sacred. How can I

effectively communicate all the information contained in my workshops, while holding the idea of the secular and sacred in tension with one another? My primary goal was to teach secular administrative skills in a way that honors the covenantal nature of a pastor's role. I wanted this training to honor the knowledge that these individuals already may have gained, correct misinformation, and provide new knowledge.

In Dr. Blair's book, *The Art of Teaching the Bible,* she discusses the state of cognitive dissonance that exists when there is a "clash of what a person knows or believes with new, conflicting knowledge or beliefs."[271] I believe this is where part of the conflict for pastor leaders lay. Pastors are trained, nay steeped, in the importance of their sacred duties and calling, but are often challenged by the secular aspects of managing staff and volunteers. In their defense, most seminary education gives little to no attention to the administrative aspects of this part of a pastor's job. Knowing this cognitive dissonance is likely to exist, I kept it in mind when discussing the bridge between the sacred and secular in my training materials and workshops.

In Paulo Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he discussed what he termed "the banking concept of education."[272] This concept is where facts are deposited into a student's brain (so to speak) and the students are to retrieve these facts (usually for a test) without an underlying knowledge of what these facts really mean.[273] It is rote memorization without understanding. This "banking" was a new concept for me but as I read about it, I realized that I had definitely utilized this method in my teaching both in

[271] Christine Eaton Blair, *The Art of Teaching the Bible* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001), 31.

[272] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 72.

[273] Ibid, 72.

the secular and the sacred world. While some information is important for students to know, for example federal labor law, it can easily be referenced in a workbook handout rather than spend valuable class time on it. I endeavored to avoid this "banking" concept in the workshop I developed.

One additional concept that Dr. Christine Blair stressed in her book was the idea of respecting the knowledge and experience that students possess. My job as an instructor was to assist them in integrating new knowledge into their existing skill set.[274] This was not a new concept for me but rather a good reminder that respect in a learning environment should be a two-way street.

The next two books, *Make It Stick* by Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, and *Powerful Teaching,* by Agarwal and Bain, were both similar in their scientific approach to effective pedagogy. Both offered practical examples for creating an engaging learning environment such that students experience greater interaction with the material and learning thus increasing retention of the same. As I was reading these books, I felt that *Powerful Teaching* was distinctly geared to a professional educator, whereas *Make it Stick* was more personal in its approach, i.e., how each of us learns and ways to improve the same. This book seemed to be written for both the teacher and the learner. And while both referenced case studies, *Powerful Teaching* presented more statistical analysis to back up their techniques.

With that said, I did gain several valuable techniques that I applied to my workshop development. The following are only a few examples of these techniques:

[274] Blair, *Teaching the Bible*, 26-27.

- Elaboration – The process of connecting what you are learning with what you already know and then expressing that concept in your own words.[275]
- Memory Cues – Utilizing images with text to assist in recall.[276]
- Spacing – Repeating/reviewing information over time. This increases the ability to retain the information.[277]

Ironically, these learning techniques somewhat conflicted with the premise of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as the focus was on memory and retention rather than the why of the learning. However, I felt that these techniques were still very valuable particularly in subject areas that may be fairly new to those attending the workshops.

Evaluation - I will take the information offered in both the seminar and the readings to assist in the content and delivery of the information for the leadership workshops I will offer. I will have workshop attendees complete evaluations for both style and content.

At the beginning of each of my four workshops, I commented on the reciprocal nature of learning. I encouraged those who attended to post comments and questions in the chat so that I could address them as we moved through the presentation. Many of the comments were insightful and several caused me to amend what I had written, both in the first and third module. I also sent surveys out after each module with the same five questions. (See Appendix L for a complete copy).

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[275] Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make it Stick* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 207-210.

[276] Ibid, 185-187.

[277] Pooja K. Agarwal and Patrice M. Bain, *Powerful Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2019), 93.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Proposal

MANAGING THE COLLISION OF THE SECULAR WITH THE SACRED:
A THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS
OF PASTORS

By

VANESSA D. BATES

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

The New Theological Seminary of the West
New York Theological Seminary

Challenge Statement

I am a Presbyterian Lay Pastor and CEO of a company. Because I bridge the secular and sacred, I have noticed that pastors struggle to handle the leadership demands that require them to be both dynamic and adaptable in the oversight of staff and volunteers, while balancing professional, pastoral, and gender specific relationships. This project will identify key training gaps in these areas and produce materials that can be used as training supplements for pastors.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING....1

CHAPTER TWO
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE....20
DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP....29
BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP....31
SITE TEAM....37

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH QUESTIONS....38

CHAPTER FOUR
PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION....42

CHAPTER FIVE
MINISTERIAL COMPETENCY....46
COMPETENCIES SELECTED/STRATGIES/EVALUTION....54

APPENDICES....55
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE....56
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS....58
APPENDIX C: INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES....63
APPENDIX D: TABLE OF MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES....111
APPENDIX E: TIMELINE FOR DISSERTATION....112
APPENDIX F: PROPOSED BUDGET....113

BIBLIOGRAPHY....116

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

I am a bi-vocational, commissioned lay pastor for the Presbytery of Los Ranchos[1] located in Orange County, California. The road to my ministry position was long and circuitous, but this road provided me with education, skills, and experience that are somewhat unique in my ministry setting. The lens with which I view the intersection of the secular and the sacred seems to differ from those whose life has existed only in a ministry setting. This differing viewpoint has created a curiosity about God's intentions for our world that is a compilation of my life experiences.

As a youth and young woman, I was unchurched. My father was raised Roman Catholic but had wandered away from his faith tradition and my mother, at age 14 having lost her father in a tragic airplane accident, was angry at God and thus had no interest in church. As a result, my only real experience in a church environment was as a teenager when I independently joined a Methodist church so that I could participate in the youth group. I was not really interested in Jesus, God, or anything related to the Bible - I just wanted to have fun with this large youth group. But as an adult, I was acquainted with a family who endured the tremendous loss of a teenage son, but did so with incredible grace and resilience. When I asked how they could endure such pain, they spoke to me of their deep and abiding faith in Jesus. This touched me and I searched out what this "faith

[1] The Presbyterian Church of America (PCUSA) is organized into regional groups geographically and these groups are called Presbyteries of which ministers of word and sacrament are members.

thing" was all about. The end result was my own salvific encounter with the risen Lord and my life began to change.

I knew nothing about the Bible, and the stories contained therein, but I began attending a small, conservative Lutheran church. I attended Bible studies, taught in the nursery, sang in the choir, and became an active, engaged member along with my husband and my two children. That was, until my marriage crumbled and I decided to obtain a divorce. This particular Lutheran church was part of a small subset of the Norwegian Lutherans and as such had very strong prohibitions against divorce. The pastor and elder of the church told me that if I persisted in this decision, I would be sentencing myself to hell and risking the spiritual lives of my children. I did divorce and as a result, was prohibited from many church activities - I was an outcast. For the sake of my children, I continued to attend, but in my heart instead of being unchurched, I was dechurched. A colleague in ministry once told me that there is no hurt like church hurt and he was right. Instead of helping me through a difficult period, embracing me with Jesus-like love, and showing me forgiveness, I felt pushed away, ashamed, and unsure of the state of my eternal life. But God had a hold of me and did not let me go.

We eventually moved away and through my daughter's involvement in a Presbyterian youth group, we began attending a local Presbyterian church. This new church knew I was divorced but had no "rules" about what I could and could not do within the church. Spiritually, I was holding back, not yet sure of my own relationship with God but willing to continue to see what God and God's church might hold for me. Simultaneous to these events and prior to my divorce, I returned to the workforce. At that moment, I had no intention of building a career or going back to school, but little did I

know that this decision to work, along with the company I worked for, would change the trajectory of my life.

I initially took a part-time position as an office assistant for a very small countertop fabrication and installation company. Previously, I had been employed as an office training coordinator for a savings and loan so this position would be easy, or so I thought. I had never worked for a small company and I had to learn on the fly as there was no time for training. Over the course of five years, the company began to grow and I grew with it. By the early '80s, I was the general manager and working full-time, but it was becoming increasingly clear to me that I lacked training in many areas that were necessary to manage our small staff and to enable the company to grow. I decided that I needed a strong grounding in business, particularly in relation to finance, so I enrolled at California State University, Fullerton seeking a BA in finance. Because I was working full-time and was, by this juncture, a single mother, it took eight long years to achieve my goal. But it was worth it because with every passing year, I gained a deeper knowledge of accounting, finance, and general business management, a knowledge that I was able to put to immediate use. And then my life direction was changed again when my then business partner (by now I was a shareholder) was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness and no longer had the strength or desire to continue in business.

By then, the business had grown from less than $100,000 to $1,000,000 in annual sales and a buyer, someone we knew and trusted, approached us about purchasing the company. I had mixed feelings about this, but I knew it was a necessary move for my partner. The new owner did not want to keep me on as he felt the staff would not adapt to him as the owner as long as I was there. At the same time, I had come to the realization

that I was reaching a cap on my own abilities to manage a growing business so I used this opportunity to enter into an Master's of Business Administration (MBA) program at the Anderson School at UCLA.

The program at Anderson was intense and challenged me to rethink all I thought I knew about managing a business. The focus of every course was very strategic in nature and designed to expand our thinking around issues related to the deployment of capital – financial capital and human capital. Every class would have a series of case studies taken from real-life companies and situations. This allowed us to analyze a given set of criterion and then discuss possible problems and solutions. Over the course of two years, as I reflected back on my previous management abilities, I came to realize that I had been a micro-manager. I tried to control every aspect of my area of responsibility, and became frustrated and angry with people who were slower than I or who approached problem-solving in a way that differed from my approach. Admittedly, I saw people as instruments or objects I needed to get the job done my way and in my timeframe. I was, what some call, managing "in the box"; deceiving myself by justifying my point of view and in doing so managed people as objects instead of people.[2] By the time I graduated, I knew I needed to move from a micro-manager to more of a macro-manager, with the same attention to detail but the ability to see the larger scope.

During the last year of my MBA program, the company we had sold was on the verge of becoming insolvent and the owner asked me to come back in and help him analyze what had gone wrong. Utilizing some of my new skills, I quickly determined the company had developed issues in almost every area of business. The owner was selling

[2] The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception Getting out of the Box,* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2018), 21.

the product for less than cost, he had not established any metrics to measure the effectiveness of both the production and installation teams, and he had underestimated the challenges of managing a heavily Latino workforce.[3] After discussing the issues with him, he hired me as a consultant and turned over complete authority to me. After my graduation, he made me an officer and shareholder. He stepped away from the daily operations and I took up the reins again. Within two years, we were back in the black and within eight years, the company had grown from a million in annual revenue to ten million and then eighteen million within several more years.

While that growth may seem impressive, it was hard won. I am a woman owning and operating a company in the field of contracting – a field that is essentially the domain of men. As a woman, I had to demonstrate not only my business savvy but also a deep understanding of the actual processes involved in the fabrication and installation of a custom-finished countertop. My male counterparts would only grant me respect when I could show them that I had mastered the mechanics of machinery, materials, fabrication, and installation plus I held an advanced degree in business that most of my male counterparts did not hold.

Unfortunately for women in ministry, similar truths still hold. Amy Jackson in her article "The Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders", states that women face unique challenges in ministry that their male counterparts often do not face. They need to be concerned with the type of clothing they wear and the fit, concerns over where to attach a mic pack, use of language viewed as "harsh" or "soft", and existing gender biases on how

[3] Southern California's unskilled labor force is dominated primarily by people from Mexico as well as Central American countries. Most were recent immigrants, spoke little English, and whose cultural context differed from ours.

they will manage both a family and ministry. [4]

These issues, while seemingly minor, can create challenges for both women in business and women in ministry. A female colleague in ministry told me that she felt that being a woman pastor is very lonely given that the field is still dominated by men. Whether I like this or not, there remain expectations for women in leadership that are different than those for men. With all this said, many of the lessons I learned in my years in business translate to my time in ministry. I learned that, in addition to the cultural sensitivities of being a woman in a man's world and a woman leader/owner of a primarily Latino workforce, to be successful in leadership is predicated on being successful in the management of people. I believe this is true whether you are managing a secular business or working within your sacred calling. Managing people often comes down to building relationships that allow people to grow, to innovate, and also to fail, because sometimes the best learning comes from failure.

My story was continuing to evolve as during this same period of growth for the company, I had become very involved in a new church, in reading and studying scripture, and in leadership, first as a deacon and then as an elder. As I became increasingly involved in ministry, I felt an overwhelming call to understand my faith better, find ways to engage my faith in my business, and to utilize my business skills in my leadership in the church. The end result was my decision to enroll in seminary and step back to see what God may be calling me to do. After four years of attending seminary while

[4] Amy Jackson, "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," *Christianity Today,* 2, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/blessings-and-burdens-for-women-leaders.html (accessed April 20, 2022).

managing my growing business, I graduated with an MAT with an emphasis in Biblical Studies.

While seminary provided me with a great theological foundation and specific skills related to exegesis, teaching, and preaching, I came to quickly realize that there were few, if any, classes on the application of biblical principles to business leadership. I felt the desire to understand the biblical principles of leadership so that I could apply them to my own business. There were certainly business principles I had learned but they did not always translate well biblically. For example, businesses seek profit because without it the business ceases to exist, but should profit be the main motive? What about the lives and well-being of all of those who worked for the company and their families? I felt well-equipped to manage the business based upon my business education but I could no longer ignore the desire to align my business goals with my sense of calling as a child of God.

The more I sought out a theology of leadership, specifically in the areas of administration that had within it embedded practical and applied theological principles, the more I came to realize that the information and formal study in this specific area was scarce. Yes, there were classes in practical theology but they focused more on narrow areas of ministry, i.e., youth and mission, and less on the everyday tasks of running a church and for me, running a business. There were opportunities for pastoral leadership training via internships and while helpful, these were more focused on the pastoral care side rather than the practical leadership and administrative side of ministry. In addition, there were a smattering of classes in the theology of leadership but these were offered as electives rather than a core requirement. Dr. Frank, in his article on "Leadership and

Administration: An Emerging Field in Practical Theology", states that this field of study lacks any "real coherence across institutional settings."[5] Additionally, he correctly states that those that possess skills in administrative leadership are often lay people with little to no formal theological training.[6] This article was written in 2006, and it appears that little has changed in this area of study.

During those years at seminary, I had many opportunities to talk to people excited to begin their ministry careers. I would often query them on what specific training they had received in managing staff and volunteers, and also in understanding the nuts and bolts of finance and facilities management. Many, if not most, had very little, if any, practical experience in this area and had not received any additional training in seminary. They felt that God would provide them with whatever they needed to be effective. And while I would never argue that God gives us all we need, I also believe God has given us scriptural examples of what can and will go wrong as well as ways to correct the same. I wondered if they had given thought to the geographical and cultural context of any ministry call that they would accept.

One lesson I learned in my conversations with both seminary students and my colleagues in ministry is that each congregation possesses a specific culture and a congregational identity that often has developed over many years. The specific cultural context is likely to impact an individual's ability to have their leadership authority accepted, particularly for new pastors entering without a full awareness of this context. The authors of the book *Studying Congregations: A Handbook* make a valid point about

[5] Thomas Edward Frank, "Leadership and Administration: An Emerging Field in Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology,* (2006): 114.

[6] Ibid.

the need for any new pastor to have a good grasp of the existing congregational culture.[7] Within any group of people that gather as a community of faith, common traits, i.e., likes and dislikes, language spoken, social and cultural heritage, even ethnicity would not be uncommon. It would not be unusual for a congregation to be fairly homogeneous in its makeup and will likely reflect the community within which they are embedded.[8] This culture could be different depending on their geography, their size, and whether they are urban, suburban, or rural. For a new pastor, understanding these factors will be important keys to understanding how, as a newcomer, they might view and fit into this existing cultural framework. I witnessed this first-hand when our founding pastor retired and a new pastor was hired. I was part of the pastor nominating committee and even we, with all our combined theological and business skills, failed to take his existing context and our existing context into account. As a result, his leadership was not accepted and he was forced to resign after 18 months.

After graduating, I became increasingly involved in the ministry work of my church and my Presbytery and this involvement increased my awareness of how the lack of practical training in the area of administration often created an area of frustration for pastors. And while it may seem simple to take business concepts and just apply them to ministry, they do not always translate well and may create more problems than they solve. In addition, business principles can fall victim to the "flavor of the week" mentality. A new book, a new concept is presented as the be-all and end-all solution to a specific problem in business, only to be replaced by the next one.

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[7] Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 82.

[8] Ibid., 80.

How should church leaders and pastors decide on what will be effective in their ministry context? In the sense that we are all impacted by our context, those called to ministry are no different than those who are called to work in the secular world. We all come from a variety of contexts that color how we view the world, how we interact in the world, and how we allow that same world to act upon us. What is different for church leaders is what we are called to accomplish. As disciples of Christ, we are called to demonstrate a theology of leadership that can integrate secular skills but is guided by a biblical framework. This is easier said than done, particularly in the world of post-Christendom.

My awareness of this need, combined with the desire of my church and my Presbytery, led to my being commissioned as a lay pastor, also known as a Commissioned Ruler Elder (CRE).[8] While this role exists within other Presbyteries across the United States, I was, and still am, the first to hold this role within my church and my Presbytery. In this role, I am often called to preach in my church, as well as in other churches. I am authorized to officiate the sacraments of communion and baptism as well as moderate Session[9], both in my church and in other churches within our Presbytery as needed. I participate in the everyday life of our church by teaching, writing and leading devotional studies, and conducting pastoral visits as needed.

In addition to this expanded role, I am a member of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). In this role, I am responsible for tracking the various academic stages of both our inquirers and candidates and reviewing the seminary transcripts of each of these individuals annually. To become a minister of Word and Sacrament within

[9] Each PCUSA Church is governed by a Session comprised of Ruler Elders and moderated by the head Pastor.

the PCUSA, you must complete a specific set of academic criteria, including a 400-hour internship and a 400-hour clinical pastor education (CPE), both in approved settings. Both of these real-life educational requirements are meant to help the students gain experience in pastoral care (CPE) and exposure to a different church environment via the internship. However, these are the only "real-life" requirements within the overall academic requirement. Exposure to the realities of managing staff, volunteers, and the dynamics of congregational life are sorely lacking.

In the midst of my work as a lay pastor and member of CPM, the pandemic hit and life changed for everyone. Life for church leaders, and particularly pastors, has been in flux over the last several decades, but with the onset of the pandemic and subsequent mandatory closures, the rate of change has accelerated. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced a change in the way many churches "do church". These changes manifested in the way we created and conducted worship services, the way we ministered to our members, and the ways in which we interacted in our community. The idea of adopting a methodical leadership approach that would take our twenty-first century world into account was replaced with a reactive sense of what do we do now – how will we survive?

Initially, as the first mandatory closure was announced, many churches, mine included, thought this would be a short-term situation. We decided to stream our services using the technology we had quickly available – the iPhone. We joined a platform service that would allow us to use the video feature of the iPhone and we streamed that live to Facebook. But as time stretched out, it became increasingly clear that we would not be back to in-person worship for a while and thus we invested in a more robust streaming set-up and began to stream to both our website and to Facebook. We made small changes

to the worship service, pre-recorded most of our music, and hoped for the best. Our leadership team decided to stick closely to the CDC recommendations on both closure and gradual reopening as the pandemic waxed and waned. And we were quite proud of ourselves and our ability to pivot quickly, that is until we and our congregants began to feel the fatigue that uncertainty brings, and cracks within the support of our decisions began to appear. In an article about this phenomenon from "The Praxis Journal", the authors state that while we believed we were only in a temporary situation, which they likened to being in a blizzard or winter season, we were actually entering an age not dissimilar to an ice age – and age that was likely to last much longer.[10]

By mid 2021, it became abundantly clear that we had lost members, and with that membership loss, we had a reduction in giving. This aligned with the anecdotal information we were receiving from our colleagues in ministry. The added stress of trying to keep our congregation spiritually vital while adhering to the ever-changing recommendations of the CDC, took a toll on our leadership team and especially our pastor. She began to express frustration over the seemingly constant stream of complaints that seemed to be based more in polarizing political rhetoric than in the compassion or care for others. In the book *Studying Congregations,* the authors make the point about the cultural context of a given church and the importance that church leadership become aware of the implicit understandings and groundings within their local church as it might relate to the greater community within which they are embedded.[11] The stress of the

[10] Andy Crouch, Kurt Keilhacker, and Dave Blanchard, "Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup," *The Praxis Journal,* (March 20, 2020), https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff (accessed April 22, 2022).

[11] Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations*, 80.

pandemic had certainly revealed biases that heretofore were more implicit but were becoming much more explicit, creating a tense and challenging atmosphere for both our pastor and our leadership team as we endeavored to minister to both sides of the divide.

There is an interesting quality about relationships - they never seem to remain the same. There is an ongoing negotiation with people that consists of a give and take that while necessary, can also be exhausting. But as the church, we are called to function in community as the body of Christ. In that community, we need to recognize that our commitment to each other demands and affirms that we be reciprocal in the give and take that mirrors God's love for us.[12] But while that has always been true, it was much more challenging in the pressure-cooker that ministry has become. Navigating this landscape of variable changes requires the ability to be adaptable – to be able to shift your perspective and lean into the perspectives of those you are both pastoring and supervising. In their book, *Leadership and Self-Deception Getting Out of the Box,* the authors call this concept being either "in the box" or "out of the box". When you are "in the box" you "experience others not as people with their own lives but objects within our lives."[13] This then skews your view of them and yourself and inhibits your ability to interact with them in a positive way.

In conversations with my pastor and other pastors in ministry, it became very evident to me that the stress of the pandemic had unveiled the vulnerabilities of those who were suffering both physical and psychological manifestations of managing in this time of change and uncertainty. They yearned for a return to what they remembered as a

[12] David R. Tomlinson, *Leading a Church to Maturity in Love* (Durham: Sacristy Press, 2019), 16.

[13] The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception Getting out of the Box*, 187.

simpler time - a time when that reciprocity of love seemed easier to achieve. They began to question their call to ministry and wonder if the time had come to seek a new career or a new call. These feelings were not unique to our geography or our faith tradition. Throughout 2021, experts in human resources have tracked what they are calling "a turnover tsunami," as professionals in most industries consider their careers in view of the ongoing pandemic, and submit resignations to their employers.[14] Whether or not this is a transitory event or a long-term change, only time will tell. Regardless of the duration, the same phenomena are happening within our churches. The realities of managing church life during the ongoing pandemic, coupled with congregational strife and divisiveness, have many pastors struggling with a sense of being overwhelmed. A recent Barna study indicated that 29 percent of pastors have given serious consideration to changing their career.[15] And if this were not pressure enough, some churches have experienced a marked decline in financial giving which is adding even more pressure to an already stressed pastorate.[16]

As I watched the pandemic take its toll within my PCUSA church and the churches within my Presbytery, I saw first-hand how much more difficult the management of the paid staff and volunteers was becoming, and how the impact of financial shortfalls were creating tough decisions for both staff and facilities

[14] Christa Cordova, "Has the Pandemic Made Your Pastor Want to Quit?," The Better Samaritan Blog Forum, *Christianity Today*, entry posted June 2, 2021. https://www.christianitytoday.com/better-samaritan/2021/june/has-pandemic-made-your-pastor-want-to-quit-probably.html (accessed April 23, 2022)

[15] Ibid.

[16] Susan Barnett, Angie Androit, and Jashalund Royston, "COVID-19: Presbyteries, Congregations and New Worshiping Communities Respond to the Pandemic," (2020): 10, *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Research Services*.

management. For churches with a single pastor, this becomes even more apparent as they attempt to juggle their duties as a pastor which includes creating a worship experience every week, preaching God's Word, and pastoring to their congregation combined with a heavy carrying of the administrative load that has been placed on their shoulders.

I remember only too well walking into the head pastor's office of my church in late 2020 when we all realized this pandemic was not going anywhere only to have her express her frustration over having to manage staff while facing a decline in giving and facilities that needed work. After listening to her and asking several clarifying questions, it was clear to me that she felt that properly managing both paid and volunteer staff was not within her skill-set; that she had never had training in this area, and instead learned only by experience, working hard to avoid dealing with staff issues. Furthermore, the pandemic was exacerbating these individuals' tolerance for instructions of any type. And she was not alone in this angst. Several pastors within our presbytery had expressed similar views and were unclear what was expected of them in managing their churches. One pastor, whose previous career had given him good skills in managing both financial and human capital, told me that without these skills, his job would be impossible. He had originally thought he wanted to be an executive pastor charged with these same duties, but was now wary of trying to be a pastor and a leader that had to hold people accountable while trying to demonstrate the biblical principles of love.

And while Covid has magnified this problem, it is neither new to church leadership nor unique. A pastor of a mid-sized church wrote an article back in 1999, published in *Christianity Today*, and then republished March 2022. He stated his leadership problem consists of leading a church that absolutely needs him to retain his

skills as pastor, lover of people, and good preacher, while having equally good skills in managing people, including setting salaries, resolving conflict, and developing them as leaders as well as being able to fundraise, accelerate the rate of the growth within the church, and improve churchwide communication. He had been trained in the normal areas of exegesis, systemic theology, spiritual counseling, and hermeneutics but not in any of these other areas and as a result, he was performing poorly.[17] The result of this realization was the need for additional training – training that he would need to seek out on his own if he were to succeed. I believe this pastor is typical of many pastors. The sacred reasons that sought them to enter ministry collided with the secular necessities of the same.

And if this need wasn't enough in its own right, the stressors of the pandemic combined with acknowledged reduction in church attendance post-Christendom, has further accelerated the rate of decline. The results from a 2008 Gallup Poll found that 42% of people in America attended church. But when they repolled in 2017, that number had dropped to 38%.[18] With this exodus, the post-Covid church has seen a decline in congregational expertise, finances, and as a result, staffing. This has created a gap and may be requiring pastors to adopt a broader skill set than they may have been required to have prior to this paradigm shift. Now pastors must not only have the requisite skills required for pastoring a church, i.e. preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, but now need

[17] Matthew Woodley, "Good Pastor, Lousy Leader," *Christianity Today*, July, 1999, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1999/summer/9l3035.html (accessed April 24, 2022).

[18] Frank Newport, "Church Leaders and Declining Religious Service Attendance," *Gallup,* 7 September, 2018. https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/242015/church-leaders-declining-religious-service-attendance.aspx (accessed April 24, 2022).

good administrative skills that include human resource management, including the management of paid staff versus volunteer staff, the ability to manage the dynamic of conflict, finance, and proper facilities use.

My years in business combined with my education in the same have provided me with a slightly different context to view ministry. With this comes the concern of how to apply the secular concepts in business to the practical needs of ministry while maintaining a strong sense of the sacred. Part of the problem may be attributed to the definition of leadership. In the business world, leadership might be defined as the ability to lead a company such that it performs at the top of its class in sales, profit, and employee satisfaction and retention, but in ministry, what stands as a good definition? Rev. Dr. Ivan Pitts, one of my current professors, stated a definition that I had never heard but felt was concise and accurate. He defined leadership in ministry as "the art of influencing people to move from their agenda to God's agenda." In my preliminary research, it would appear that there is an area of praxis often missing in ministry preparation. This is a clearly stated theology of leadership whose principles can be applied to the secular tasks that lay within the sacred calling of ministers. This is more than preaching God's Word, and more than pastoral care. It is creating a leadership environment that is both dynamic and adaptable while maintaining accountability.

Pastors, by the nature of their positions, have implicit levels of authority – authority to conduct worship, preach God's Word, and engage with, and often manage, both paid staff and volunteers. Unfortunately, this implicit authority is not always recognized by those within the congregation. This requires that the pastor establish a level of trust and authenticity such that those in the congregation recognize and accept

this authority. Pastors have the dual task of having to balance their sense of authenticity to their call from God, while demonstrating competency in areas that may often feel unrelated to their ministry and theological training. To me, this begs the question of how pastors can manage all of these areas while maintaining spiritual integrity and not suffering a complete burnout? Just like managers in the business world, pastors are confronted with problems and situations that are both complex and ever-changing. Ignoring these problems, hoping that they will somehow resolve themselves, is at best foolhardy. Problems left unresolved can often lead to even bigger problems making the solutions that much more complex and difficult to administer.

So in a world that needs God's love more than ever but faced with unique ministry challenges, the questions remain - how does a pastor direct, supervise, and at times, terminate both staff and volunteers while remaining their pastor and often their confidant? What are the theological issues surrounding and supporting these skills and how does one person decide what gets priority? For my church and my pastor, my business skill set combined with my theological education put me in the position to ease some of the administrative load with which my pastor was struggling. But this is not necessarily the case in many churches as the lay leaders may have solid secular training but lack an equally robust theological training.

My journey, both spiritual and secular, brought me to this time and place where I feel called to seek out answers to these questions and in doing so, provide the badly need assistance to those both entering the ministry and those in ministry. I propose to research what currently exists in terms of a theology of leadership and how adaptable it may be to the administrative skill set of people management that is part of the work in ministry. I

will provide a clearly stated theology and then link that to specific areas of skills needed to manage people. I will identify training gaps in the areas of staff and volunteer oversight, task delegation and accountability, and conflict resolution both at the seminary level and for existing pastors, specifically paying attention to the nuances of leadership in the male-dominated ministry culture, and create a training program that addresses those gaps and can act as a resource for new and existing pastors.

CHAPTER 2
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

I am a Presbyterian Lay Pastor and CEO of a company. Because I bridge the secular and sacred, I have noticed that pastors struggle to handle the leadership demands that require them to be both dynamic and adaptable in the oversight of staff and volunteers, while balancing professional, pastoral, and gender specific relationships. This project will identify key training gaps in these areas and produce materials that can be used as training supplements for pastors.

As we entered year three of the Covid-19 pandemic, our societal divisions seemed to grow ever deeper. Just as some sense of normalcy seemed to be returning to church life, new economic problems precipitated by growing inflation fears, looming global conflicts, and the continuing debate over the ever-changing nature of the Covid-19 virus, have reignited the divisiveness within the church and society at large. It has been my experience that when people are experiencing stress, they tend to swing between extremes. At times they withdraw, at other times they overreact. It is a leader's job to be able to moderate between these extremes and provide what Peter Steinke calls a "non-anxious presence".[19] But providing this type of non-anxious presence often takes both a certain amount of maturity and a lot of practice. Modeling ministerial leadership within a context of fear and division has heightened the stress that pastors feel, leaving many pastors stressed to the point of burnout. When a leader is stressed to this point, the ability to self-regulate emotions and provide a sense of calm becomes even more challenging.

[19] Peter L. Steinke, *Uproar: Calm Leadership in Anxious Times* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2019), 51.

Kyle Rohane's article in *Christianity Today* cited the following responses to this Barna Group Survey question, "Have you given serious consideration to quitting full-time ministry within the last year?"[20] Those individuals who responded "yes" rose from 29% in January 2021 to 38% in October 2021.[21] The issue of burnout, if left unaddressed, can leave pastors and their congregations devastated. Furthermore, younger pastors (those under the age of 45) are more likely to quit full-time ministry (46%) as compared to older pastors (34%).[22]

Ecclesiastes tells us that "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)[23] Perhaps it is the time and season to ask ourselves why it appears that our pastors seem to be unprepared for ministry in this shifting space? Part of the answer may be that in the world of post-Christendom, the church can no longer rely on the "state" or societal pressures to keep church a mainstay of life in America. And perhaps that is a good thing. Life as a Christian, and the desire to be involved in God's Kingdom, would seem to be more authentic if it is driven from the moving and prodding of the Spirit rather than from a perceived societal norm. If that holds true, the Church and those pastors providing leadership must then rely much more on persuasion than on mandate. This puts even more pressure on pastoral leadership which is already suffering the pressure that arises within a ministry context and a world whose rate of change is accelerating.

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[20] Kyle Rohane, "Our Pulpits Are Full of Empty Preachers," *Christianity Today,* April, 2022, 47.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 46.

[23] All Biblical citations will be from NRSVUE unless otherwise indicated.

In January 2022, Lifeway Research conducted a survey of American Protestant pastors to determine what they felt were their greatest needs. They are, in order of magnitude, as follows:

- **77% Developing leaders & volunteers**
- 76% Fostering connections with unchurched people
- 75% People's apathy or lack of commitment
- 72% Consistency in personal prayer
- 69% Friendship and fellowship with others
- 68% Consistency of Bible reading not related to sermon or teaching preparation
- **68% Training current leaders & volunteers**
- 66% Trusting God
- 64% Relationships with other pastors
- 64% Consistency taking a Sabbath[24]

These results confirm what I have experienced and the anecdotal stories I have been told. And notice the two that are highlighted both concern people management, with the number one issue being the need (and perhaps lack of ability) to develop leaders and volunteers. And while discouragement and thoughts of leaving ministry are likely to occur sometime within the life of any pastor, all of the additional stressors seemingly revealed by the Covid-19 pandemic have brought these issues to the fore.

Larger congregations have found their solution in the ability to hire more staff and in particular, executive pastors. These pastors often have training from outside of the

[24] Aaron Earls, "The Greatest Needs of Pastors", *Lifeway Research*, 11 January, 2022, https://research.lifeway.com/2022/01/11/u-s-pastors-identify-their-greatest-needs/ (accessed May 5, 2022).

ministry setting, many having completed an MBA degree and/or having worked in a leadership capacity that required the skills needed to hire, train, and oversee staff and volunteers.[25] Unfortunately, this solution is mainly the domain of much larger churches who have the budgets to afford to call a pastor for this position. But where does that leave the smaller churches that represent the majority of congregations across the United States?

In a survey conducted by Faith Communities Today in collaboration with the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, prior to the pandemic, there were increasing rates of decline in attendance prompting a growing number of smaller congregations.[26] Over the past twenty years, median church attendance has decreased from an average of 137 individuals to 65 individuals and the result has been an increase in the number of small congregations from 45% to 65%.[27]

I was also curious about the profile of a typical pastor entering the ministry. In a survey conducted in late 2000 by *CT Pastors*, the following attributes were noted:

- Two-thirds of pastors (67%) within this study had been raised by at least one Christian parent.
- 87% of pastors choose ministry because of a strong sense of call.
- 66% of pastors choose to attend a seminary versus a Bible college as preparation.[28]

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[25] Deborah Ike, "How to Define the Executive Pastor Role," The Church Operations Toolkit, https://www.churchoperationstoolkit.com/define-executive-pastor-role/ (accessed May 24, 2022).

[26] Scott Thuma, "Twenty Years of Congregational Change: The 2020 Faith Communities Today Overview," *Faith Communities Today Summary Report*, 2020, 11.

[27] Ibid.

[28] John Larue, "Profile of Today's Pastor," *CT Pastors*, October, 2000, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2000/october-online-only/cin01025.html (accessed May 25, 2022).

In that same survey, the top five things thought lacking in Seminary/Bible training were:

- 31% conflict management
- 24% business administration/management
- 12% leadership
- 7% spirituality
- 6% counseling[29]

Given that these statistics appear to indicate there are a growing number of smaller congregations with fewer resources, and that the training and development of leaders and volunteers (and I would add staff) is a top concern, I was curious to see if leadership training of any type was part of the required curriculum at some of the larger seminaries.

Part of my curiosity was prompted by a recent final assessment[30] of a candidate for ministry who had just graduated from Fuller Seminary with his Master of Divinity degree. During the interview, we discussed his internship at one of the larger churches in our Presbytery and he made a very telling comment. He stated that he felt that all of his classes prepared him for the theological and pastoral side of ministry but after watching and learning from the head pastor of this larger congregation, he felt very concerned about his own ability to manage the administrative side. I asked him if the topic of administrative leadership had ever come up as a general concern within his peer group.

[29] Ibid.

[30] As part of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), when a candidate has completed all the required classes and internships, and passed all the ordination exams, the final step is for this candidate to present an exegetical paper and sermon to CPM to conduct a final assessment on the individual's readiness to accept a call to ordained ministry.

He responded that most, if not all, of his conversations with his peers at seminary revolved around the theological rather than the practical.

To delve deeper into this question about the availability of leadership training at seminary, I conducted a preliminary review of the Master of Divinity curriculum of nine major theological seminaries: Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Harvard Divinity School, Luther Seminary, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, and Duke University Divinity School. And while this is hardly an exhaustive search, I did find it interesting that not one of them required specific leadership courses in the skills needed to manage the administrative requirements that are part and parcel of the job of a pastor. Concordia University in Irvine does offer a specialized degree in ministry leadership that spans from Bachelor's to Master's in a five-year period. I see this as an encouraging sign that the issue of offering leadership training as part of ministry training may be gaining attention.

To give further support to my growing sense that this type of training has not been an essential part of the pastoral training process, I utilized Survey Monkey[31] to send out a brief qualitative survey to 46 pastors that are registered within my Presbytery. I asked the following five questions about leadership training within the sphere of administration:

1. While in seminary, did you take any courses in how to manage paid staff and volunteers?
2. Did your internship provide you with this training?
3. Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses, or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

[31] Survey Monkey is an online survey resource that allows participants to remain anonymous and quickly gathers data by answer category.

4. Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? Check all that apply.
5. Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (See Appendix A for a copy of the entire questionnaire)

I received 39 responses and the results were not surprising to me. 92% of the respondents had not taken any courses on managing staff and volunteers. Only 7 out of the 39 felt that the internships provided this type of training. 56% of those in ministry have taken additional courses to help them in this area but when asked where else they may have learned these skills, 77% answered "trial and error". On the final question about where they learned to manage conflict, the selection of the answer "trial and error" scored the highest at 64%. (See Appendix B for complete results and Appendix C for individual responses). As these results were coming in, I received several emails from respondents encouraging me in this work. Several examples were as follows:

- "I pray your voice is heard."
- "This is needed so I hope something helpful comes from this."
- "Very interesting work, please let me know how else I can help."

As I pondered all of this qualitative and quantitative data, I wondered why seminaries do not seem to view this type of training as an important component of the overall preparation for ministry. Is it possible that those who develop the curriculum for Master of Divinity training feel that the specific skills needed for proper administration of staff and volunteers is the purview of secular training? Is this an anachronism of past thinking around the skills needed to pastor a church? In Tod Bolsinger's book, *Canoeing the Mountains,* he comments on the skills in which he received training. He states, "When I went to seminary, we were trained in skills that were necessary for supporting faith in Christendom – teaching (for providing Christian Education), liturgics (for leading

Christian services), and pastoral care (for offering Christian counsel and support)".[32] Unfortunately, Christian leaders were not trained or prepared for a world that is rapidly changing.[33]

It is no surprise that this type of training has long been advocated in business school, particularly in graduate courses. Late in the 20th century, there was a burst of interest in business leadership. Books, seminars, and classes offered competing ideas as to what qualities would make for a good leader and how to cultivate those qualities. Assuming all of what was written had value, then the outcome would be a better workplace, a stronger company, and unparalleled success. Steven Covey's book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* was first published in 1989, and became the go-to book for leaders. Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, wrote numerous books on leadership and his theories and case studies often held a prominent place in leadership classes. And of course, Jim Collins' book *Good to Great* is still a best seller to this day. All had bits of wisdom, all were fairly formulaic, but not all would or should transfer to leadership from a biblical perspective. Leadership principles for business are based on specific material outcomes and bottom-line profits. And if applied to ministry, the outcomes may be wildly successful but bereft of any true association to the Kingdom of God.[34] Just as business leaders often succumb to the "flavor of the week" in what makes a good leader and how to learn and exercise those skills, church leadership may be vulnerable to that same problem. And while many of these books tout the answer to the

[32] Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing The Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 13.

[33] Ibid., 18.

[34] Russell L. Huizing, "Bringing Christ to the Table of Leadership: Moving Towards a Theology of Leadership," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership, Volume 5, No. 2*, (Fall 2011): 62.

problem of stagnant growth or leadership failure, all run the risk of offerings solutions to churches that simply lack the resources for implementation.

To make the issue more complex are the sensitivities around managing gender differences. Both men and women tend to have slightly different styles of leadership. And as stated in the introduction, women often need to overcome additional barriers in arenas that have long been dominated by men, and ministry is no exception. The Barna Group did a study in 2009 that showed that the ratio of women to men who are senior pastors within Protestant Churches was steadily increasing.[35] But sadly, women still face hurdles in church leadership - both in the perception of their right to lead and when that is not the barrier, their ability to be accepted and treated equally. In the book of Judges, we have the story of a woman judge named Deborah. Deborah is rather unique in that she is only one of a few women leaders who held prominence in the Bible. God chose Deborah to fulfill His purpose and she was a courageous leader at a time when women were seldom placed in leadership positions. As judge, Deborah served with strength, wisdom, and humility and thus was able to free the Israelites from the oppression of a cruel king. As a result, the land was at rest for forty years. (Judges 4-5) And yet even with examples like this, women are still subject to far more scrutiny in their call to leadership and ability to do the same than their male counterparts.

Both men and women face assumptions based upon gender biases. Women are more likely to be queried on their abilities with reference to work-life balance,

[35] The Barna Group, "Research Releases in Leaders and Pastors," September, 2009, https://www.barna.com/research/number-of-female-senior-pastors-in-protestant-churches-doubles-in-past-decade/ (accessed May 19, 2022).

particularly if the woman has children or may have children.[36] Men and women often have differing styles of communication, with women often using more tentative language which might transmit hesitancy or uncertainty. Conversely, in the world of the #MeToo movement, men must be made to be more aware of how both body language and the spoken word can communicate an offensive message to the opposite sex. However, in all my research to date, I have not found a resource that fully incorporates gender differences as it relates to the various administrative skills addressed above. And while it is true, at least with PCUSA, that boundary training[37] is required every three years, this is often seen as just another mandated activity without real benefit. With all of this in mind, we are still left with the question: How do we determine what business theories might translate well in the world of ministry, taking gender issues into account and that specifically address the leadership demands of staff and volunteers and the complexities of the same? Perhaps a good place to start is to define what the word leadership conveys in both the secular and the sacred worlds.

Definition of Leadership

There are several good definitions of leadership with respect to how a for-profit business might define it. I found this definition from a summary in an article on leadership in the Harvard Business Review to be especially appropriate. It states: "Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants – a

[36] Amy Jackson, "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," *Christianity Today*. August 2016. https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/blessings-and-burdens-for-women-leaders.html (accessed April 20, 2022).

[37] Boundary training consists of both state-mandated sexual harassment and discrimination training combined with suggestions on how to maintain proper distinction between ministerial duties and personal time and space.

human and social achievement that stems from the leader's understanding of his or her fellow workers and the relationship of their individual goals to the group's aim."[38] Although this definition is in a secular context, it would also hold true in a sacred context. As stated in the previous chapter, my professor, Dr. Ivan Pitts, defines biblical leadership as "the art of influencing people to move from their agenda to God's agenda." In both of these definitions, the key point is people – a relationship with people that is developed to create an alignment of goals. Eric Law, in his book *Holy Currencies,* expands the word currency to include most facets of ministerial leadership including leading people and the graciousness and patience it takes to lead while maintaining Godly relationships.[39] All of these statements concerning leadership have validity but as leaders working for the building up of God's Kingdom, we need to hear what the Bible says about leadership.

The scriptures have many stories and examples of what biblical leadership should look like. And as I examined several of these, I was also mindful that the context of these examples cannot be ignored. Neither can we ignore the sweep of scripture that all points to our relationship with God and God's desire to be in relationship with us. Nor can we ignore the impact that these reciprocal relationships can have on how we experience the stories in scripture. John Goldingay, in his book *Models of Interpretation of Scripture,* warns us that, "The notion of rule and hierarchy is essential to being human, but it is a

[38] W.C.H. Prentice, "Understanding Leadership," *Harvard Business Review*, January, 2004, https://hbr.org/2004/01/understanding-leadership (accessed May 25, 2022).

[39] Eric H.F. Law, *Holy Currencies: 6 Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2013), 21.

rule that humanity as such exercises over the rest of creation, not a rule exercised by some human beings over others."[40]

I think it is important to ask ourselves if these various examples of biblical leadership point us in a direction such that a general theology of leadership can be developed? And can this theology of leadership be broken down into practical, teachable components so that an argument could be made that this should become part of the seminary curriculum or taught as an adjunct for additional pastoral training?

Additionally, is the lack of biblically founded leadership training hurting the pastoral competency of current and future pastors? Is it contributing to the stress and rates of burn-out previously discussed? I would argue that developing a theory of leadership that finds its grounding in scripture could act as a bridge between the secular aspects of leadership and the sacred. As pastor leaders, our leadership cannot be divorced from theology. To explore this question deeper, I turned to the Bible to see what scripture may say about leadership in general and, more specifically, what does the Bible say with respect to administrative oversight, delegation, and conflict resolution.

Biblical Examples of Leadership

At its heart, Christianity is about following Jesus, the author of our faith. Jesus' last command to his disciples was this:

> "**18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit **20** and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

[40] John Goldingay, *Models for the Interpretation of Scripture* (Toronto, Canada: Clements Publishing, 2004), 95.

It is clear that we are to follow the teachings of Jesus and lead others to these same teachings. But the context within which we lead differs for each of us. Our communities, our cultures, societal changes, and pressures all impact the way in which we lead. Does that mean that there can never be a fixed model of Christian leadership that can be applied in all circumstances? Perhaps the answer is yes, but what must hold true is that all leadership training must be rooted in the central message of God's gracious love and mercy. Holding people accountable, learning to delegate, solving conflicts, and adapting to gender differences all must reflect the Christ-like manner in which we are called to lead. And because we are not merely called by Christ to be followers but we are also called to be leaders, our leadership becomes an expression of our faith. To help in that examination, we can turn back to the very origins of our faith found in the Old Testament scriptures. God's call to Abram (Abraham) found in Genesis was one of the first we hear:

> "**1** Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

As we follow Abraham's lineage, we see God's call to his progeny and finally, to Moses. In the first chapters of Exodus, we read about Moses' preparation in leadership due to his royal upbringing in the house of Pharoah. God was preparing Moses for what God would call Moses to do – deliver the nation of Israel from bondage and lead them on a life-altering journey.

Examples of the leadership selection and training process moved from generation to generation throughout the Old Testament stories, and into the New Testament and the establishment of the early church. In the book of Acts, we have numerous stories of the

beginnings of the early church – these people of "The Way". As they began to coalesce as a group, several events, such as the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the selection of deacons, and the development of home churches became part of life. And because of their faithfulness and their willingness to follow the lead of the apostles, a rhythm of life began. And as the church grew, more organization and more leadership became necessary.

An example of the need for more leadership and the sharing of duties is found in the sixth chapter of Acts:

> "[1] Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. [2] And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. [3] Therefore, brothers and sisters, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, [4] while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." [5] What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.[6] They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them." (Acts 6:1-6)

The New Testament has many scriptures passages like this one that we find in Acts - passages that directly relate to the work of administration in the church:

1. Administration does not have to be practical versus spiritual (2 Cor. 9:12-15).
2. Administration concerns the pastor's total task (Titus 1:5-9).
3. Administration is enhanced through scholarly study (2 Tim. 2:15).
4. Administration is an art as much as a skill and needs to be practiced (Jas 2:14-18).
5. Administration is more concerned with people over process (1 Cor.12:18-28).

6. Administration should act as a preserver of peace, rather than a producer of conflict (1 Cor. 8:7-13).[41]

Undergirding passages like these is the understanding that the work of God, the appropriate and proper leadership of God's people, will stand as a fulfillment of the work we are called to do.

As we read and understand scripture, we can find support for specific needs like delegation. The skill of delegation is often a challenge for those in ministry who may feel that it is just easier to do a task themselves rather than take the time necessary to teach another. And for smaller churches, it may be an issue of what task to delegate to whom and when. Or it may be that volunteers make up the bulk of those who can execute necessary tasks, and recruiting and managing those individuals may or may not require a different set of skills.

As referenced earlier, the story of Moses and the demands on his leadership skills provide a good foundation for the issues of training and delegation. Moses became quickly overwhelmed by the magnitude of leading this ragtag group of people called the Israelites. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, observed all the people coming to Moses to solve their problems and he (Jethro) recognized that this would exhaust Moses in short order. And so a wonderful piece of leadership advice was given to Moses by his father-in-law, advice we should be mindful of even today. In Exodus, Jethro said this:

> "**19** Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God and bring their cases to God. **20** Teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. **21** You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. **22** Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you but decide every minor

[41] Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011), 4-5.

> case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. **23** If you do this and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their homes in peace." (Exodus 18:19-23)

Just in this short passage we can glean many salient facts about Godly leadership. While God calls us as leaders, God also expects us to function effectively, and within that effectiveness are several important points:

- Leaders are not expected to do the entire job alone.
- Leaders who do attempt to go it alone risk burnout.
- God provides others as advisors to assist in leadership.
- Learning when and what to delegate can make the leadership job less onerous.
- Delegation does not remove responsibility of oversight from the leader.

It is clear from this one passage that God understands and provides for the practical needs of leading people. As previously mentioned, Acts 6:1-6 provides a good example of how the church solved the problem of too much work and not enough people. Notice that in this story of delegation, we have selection criteria – people of good standing, full of the Spirit, and wisdom. For pastor leaders, the selection criteria may differ but the point remains the same. You will be a more effective leader if and when you learn to select good staff and volunteers to assist you in the overwhelming work of ministry.

The same is true when it comes to conflict resolution. Conflict can bring out the best and/or the worst in people and leaders are no exception. If pastors have not received training in leadership, it is likely that they are not trained to deal with conflict when it arises. Whenever you are managing people, sometime or another, conflict will arise. And while we may desire to avoid conflict completely, sometimes conflict can present

opportunities for learning and growth for both parties. The ability to recognize the early warning signs, learn mitigation strategies, and have a willingness to know that it takes "two to tango" are all a part of conflict management and resolution. Unfortunately, we often introduce conflict into situations by the words we say and/or our lack of understanding of an existing cultural context. James speaks of the former in chapter three of his epistle:

> "[5] So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.
> How great a forest is set ablaze by a such a small fire!" (James 3:5)

And while the Bible is chock full of examples of conflict, I believe that Jesus, in His sermon on the mount found in the Gospel of Matthew, gives us a good piece of wisdom about dealing with conflict:

> "[23] So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, [24] leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

Pastors, by the nature of their calling in Christ, are called to cultivate those under their care with compassion and grace. Furthermore, we are to treat each other with respect. I call this the "adult contract". Paul speaks to this in his letter from 1 Thessalonians:

> "[12] But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you;[13] esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

Any proposed workbook, curriculum, or seminar targeted towards enhancing the skills of pastors must be supported by theology. However, care must be given in applying any of these biblical examples to a given context. Otherwise, just like with the "flavor of the week" mentality that is pervasive in leadership books in business, we could also fall victim to utilizing scriptures whose context does not provide for a good application. Part

of the challenge lies in learning how to apply a basic underlying scriptural claim to leadership while teasing out the appropriate sacred and secular examples.

While knowing what the scripture says with respect to leadership, delegation, and conflict resolution, learning how to apply those concepts, including specificity of styles (gender differences) and translate them into practical and effective training materials, is the issue at hand. My training in business and in theology along with my experience within my church context as a leader, provides a starting point for my query. I propose first to examine both secular and sacred writings on the specific administrative skills outlined above and draw from them what I believe is the "best of class". I will extend my interviews, questionnaires, and the like to include those recently graduated from seminary and those who create the curriculum for the same. The end goal will be to create a series of documents or curriculum that can be used for hands-on training, whether that be at the seminary level or post-graduate level, primarily targeting those entering the ministry or who may be moving from a second-level position in ministry, such as youth ministry, to a head of staff position.

Site Team

The following individuals will comprise my site team:

- Jim Bogenreif – Elder within my church, business owner specializing in marketing
- Alan Purvis – Elder within my church, retired private college President, and well-read theologian
- Jerry Rudmann – Deacon within my church, PhD in Educational Psychology
- Rev. Lissa Smith – Head pastor of my church

- Rev. Leanne Strommen – Head pastor of a church within my Presbytery, friend and colleague with a heart for administration

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Biblical and Theological:
In what ways does a theology of Christian leadership as found in both testaments as well as in additional theological writings, inform, direct, and provide healthy pastoral examples for the ways in which we are called to manage our staff and volunteers, specifically in the areas of delegation, accountability, and conflict resolution?

Christianity, at its very heart, calls believers to a life of both following Christ and leading others in a manner worthy of Christ. But what does that mean exactly and how do we define the phrase "theology of leadership"? And once defined, how do we determine the criteria by which we can judge which leadership examples are scripturally based, Christ-centered, and applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world? If we desire to develop godly leadership skills, particularly in the administrative areas of our daily work, we must look to godly resources.

Developing a theology of leadership is not as simple as listing out the primary and secondary characteristics of biblical leaders. If we used only these characteristics and ignored the context in which these different characteristics were deployed, we might miss the work of God given to biblical leaders for specific circumstances. Furthermore, how would we decide which combination of gifts are the right ones? In spite of our imperfect nature, God chose to fulfill His salvific mission through Christ and proclaimed by the Church. Part of the answer may lie in the scriptural, contextual component of a theology of leadership. It is within that context that we find how God chooses leaders and provides

opportunities for them to learn and develop their leadership skills in tune with needed particular gifts, gifts endowed upon them by God.

In my research, I will endeavor to seek a theology that defines leadership versus a leadership theory that I could overlay onto a theology.[42] I will review a variety of both ancient and contemporary theologians to provide accurate and helpful boundaries for any definitions or skills that I believe will be helpful to those I desire to serve. Once defined, I will provide specific examples, including their scriptural contexts, from both the Old and New Testaments in the areas of hiring, accountability, and delegation, as well as conflict resolution.

Psycho-Social:
How do perceived gender differences impact our interactions and overall style of leadership with both our staff and volunteers, and do these gender perceptions create unique challenges in maintaining pastoral authenticity and authority?

I believe that men and women are called equally by God to positions of leadership within the Church universal. When God calls, God equips. But each of us have different gifts along with our gender, and how gender has been treated within the Church may impact how we have been trained to use our gifts. Furthermore, perceptions of gender differences (real or imagined) may create challenges for leaders on both sides of the gender divide. Understanding these differences and making good use of our unique gifts can assist pastors in managing the administrative tasks that are an important part of their pastoral duties.

I propose to research literature that has been written as an attempt to understand the gender differences in approaches to leadership. I will incorporate this understanding

[42] Russell L. Huizing, "Bringing Christ to the Table of Leadership: Moving Towards a Theology of Leadership," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership, Volume 5, no.2*, (Fall 2011): 62.

into both the workshops and workbooks I propose to produce in goal three. With that said, I want to be clear that I understand that I am a white, professional woman and thus possess my own, unintended biases that could possibly influence my research. Given the broad nature of the 21st century definition of gender and my previously stated understanding of my own bias, I will focus only on those differences as understood in literature that may exist between men and women. To add to my own understanding and to be helpful to others, I will also explore the womanist viewpoint on gender differences.

Organizational:
In the area of secular and sacred leadership models, what models have been found to be the most helpful in developing needed administrative leadership skills and how might these two models be merged in such a way that the pastoral skill set is enhanced?

The 20th century witnessed an explosion of literature, both secular and sacred, in the development of leadership.[43] But as previously stated, there maybe be a danger in assuming that secular leadership examples can be applied easily in the sacred setting of ministry or that sacred examples that were popular in the 20th century still work in the church today, particularly after the wrecking ball of Covid. Additionally, what outcome are we seeking when we look to these leadership theories?

Part of the problem in existing theories of leadership, as they apply to business, is their focus on the qualities of the leader, ignoring the aspects of the team members and organizational goals. Unfortunately, Christian leadership theories often fall victim to these same phenomena. And to compound this problem, congregations often have high and unrealistic expectations of pastors, not only as it relates to their abilities to preach,

[43] Ibid., 59.

teach, and act as Christ's representative in the world, but also of their real-world managerial skills.

I propose to seek out secular and sacred models of leadership that have been field-tested and backed up by an evaluation process to determine their efficacy. My preliminary research suggests that this may be easier to accomplish with the secular models of leadership than with the sacred models. Although many books have been written with regards to sacred leadership traits, not as many can provide proof of a positive outcome. I may find that my work will need to adopt qualitative and quantitative methods to determine their ease of use and their ability to create a positive and lasting change. It is my hope that my research and my work will join together to make this research and goal objective possible.

CHAPTER FOUR
PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

This project will begin with a series of questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups to further clarify existing training/knowledge gaps, along with useful skills for new pastors and/or pastors moving into a head of staff position. It is my hope that the information collected in the first two goals below, plus the research information from the research questions, will provide a solid basis for goal three in creating workshop training and materials in the areas of leadership administration.

Goal One – To identify training/knowledge gaps within recent seminary graduates from two to three mainline Protestant denominations in the areas of staff and volunteer administration with respect to hiring, delegation, and accountability, and also with respect to the area of conflict resolution.

- **Strategy One –** Create a questionnaire for recent seminary graduates from multiple denominations who are seeking pastoral positions or who have been recently hired into their first pastoral position. The questionnaire will ask them to specify the type of theological training they received in seminary in regard to staff management, volunteer management, and conflict resolution.
- **Strategy Two –** Send out between 50 to 75 questionnaires to these identified targets with the purpose of gathering and identifying the training/knowledge gaps.

- **Strategy Three –** Review the answers and select five to ten individuals to interview in order to gather more detailed information as to their specific pastoral role/setting and how their sacred and secular skills have, or have not, been developed.
- **Evaluation for Goal One -** Success will be measured by a return rate of 10-15% for the questionnaires and the ability to accurately capture more detailed information in interviews and will be provided in a document summarizing the results.

Goal Two – To determine which models of leadership, with respect to both the secular and the sacred, have provided the most assistance in the area of administrative pastoral leadership.

- **Strategy One –** Create an interview template and interview two to three Executive Pastors (those who have additional training from secular sources) to determine what skills they brought with them from their secular training that they adapted to enhance their pastoral leadership role and how gender differences helped or hurt their abilities.
- **Strategy Two –** Conduct a focus group by inviting five to seven long-term Senior Pastors who have not had this additional training. Use questions developed for the focus group to determine if and where they learned these needed skills, and which ones have been the most helpful. I will include several questions on gender differences to determine areas that have been helpful and harmful in the interactions.
- **Strategy Three –** Schedule, conduct, and document both sets of interviews.

- **Evaluation of Goal Two** - Compare and contrast the information gathered in strategies one and two and see where they do, and do not, align. This information will be helpful in focusing future training materials.

Goal Three – From the information gathered in goals one and two, create a series of workshop materials that address hiring, delegation, and accountability between a pastor and his/her staff and volunteers as well as conflict resolution within the same set. Within each workshop will be modules that address the differences between paid staff and volunteers, and the gender nuances that can both enhance and impede success in these areas of pastoral leadership.

- **Strategy One** - Schedule and conduct two workshops focusing on hiring, delegation, and accountability for new pastors or new heads of staff. The workshops will have two components – paid staff versus volunteer staff and the gender nuances that can impede or improve tactics and objectives in hiring, delegating, and holding people accountable.
- **Strategy Two** - Schedule and conduct two workshops focusing on conflict resolution for new pastors and/or new heads of staff. The workshops will have two components – paid staff versus volunteer staff and the gender nuances that can impede or improve conflict resolution.
- **Strategy Three** - Use feedback gathered from the workshops to refine the take home booklet that will accompany each workshop.
- **Strategy Four** – If time permits, schedule a three-month follow-up with those who attended the workshops and if needed, revise the workshop materials accordingly.

- **Evaluation for Goal Three –** Success will be measured by an evaluation questionnaire that will be administered after each workshop session and the final workshop booklet will be adjusted accordingly.

CHAPTER 5
MINISTERIAL COMPETENCY

My site team and I met via Zoom so that I could record the meetings and properly capture all the relevant comments. To facilitate the conversation and help focus our thoughts, I created a grid to capture the qualifying words for each competency by site team member. This allowed me to quickly capture areas of both consensus and divergence. (See Appendix D for Competency Scale Grid)

My site team consists of five members of my congregation. The team is a mixture of both clergy and laity, with the clergy being two females – Rev. Lissa Smith and Rev. Leanne Strommen, and the laity being three males – Alan Purvis, Dr. Jerry Rudmann, and Jim Bogenreif. They were selected for their knowledge of the difficulties of pastoring and managing staff (clergy), as well as the variety of secular business, administration, and teaching skills (laity). They are also encouraging and supportive of my educational path with this program. After completing the Competency Grid Scale, the team thoroughly discussed the competencies and each member's feedback is summarized in this chapter.

1. <u>Theologian:</u>

Vanessa has formal training in scriptural studies and demonstrates a strong working knowledge of scriptural texts as they relate in their context and in the world today. She brings her training into practical application in the writing of weekly devotions, Bible studies, and preaching. She has a strong understanding of both Protestant doctrine (particularly reformed theology) and Roman Catholic doctrine. While

she has studied other religions, she is not an expert in those doctrines. She relates well to people in her demographic, but she may need more training in relating to people who are not in her demographic, i.e., younger people and/or people with different cultural backgrounds. However, the team felt she was still quite competent in the area of theologian. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

2. Preacher/Interpreter of Sacred Texts*:

Part of the nature of preaching is constant development both in context and style. Vanessa has demonstrated skill in the area of preaching but could continue to improve her ability to reach a variety of demographics and cultures, particularly given that she has only been preaching for ten years. With her new role as CRE to the entire Presbytery of Los Ranchos, she now has more opportunities to preach to different congregations with differing liturgy styles and demography. Vanessa has expressed a desire to improve in this area. For this reason, **the team, together with Vanessa, choose this competency for Vanessa.**

3. Worship Leader*:

Not unlike Pastor and Preacher, a Worship Leader should always be developing skills and knowledge. Vanessa has demonstrated skills as a Worship Leader in prayers, preaching, and officiating the sacraments. But she has not had much experience in building the worship experience from beginning to end. Nor has she demonstrated knowledge in the area of sacred music and other art forms. For this reason, **the team, together with Vanessa, choose this competency for Vanessa.**

4. Prophetic Agent:

Vanessa speaks the truth of scripture even when that word may not be popular and is aware of her own biases and impact of her own context. However, she hasn't sought out opportunities to engage in social injustices or demonstrated a knowledge of the root causes of social injustices and cultural upheaval. With respect to the needs of the Church universal, Vanessa's project could be seen as acting as a prophetic agent to the need of pastors who are unskilled and untrained in the area of administrative leadership which could impact the ethical issues facing the church in areas of gender and culture. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

5. Leader:

Vanessa meets most of these criteria. Vanessa works with the Committee for Preparation for Ministry and has demonstrated skills in working with those who are considering a career in ministry, as well as working with a variety of people on the committee. It is a very important competency and one that needs to be continually developed. With this said, Vanessa needs to be willing to address difficult issues that face a congregation without compromising her own stance on a given issue. There is a delicate balance between explaining the facts, while not offending congregants. However, she has held a variety of leadership roles at church - Deacon Moderator, Ruling Elder for a variety of areas, and now a Lay Pastor, and executed each well. Her work in ministry will give her natural opportunities to develop this skill. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

6. Religious Educator*:

Vanessa has taught many classes and seminars in business, and has demonstrated the skill of public speaking. She has taught Bible classes but has not received any formal training in the role of religious educator. In addition, she has no experience in teaching to a younger demographic. She has expressed a great interest in developing her skills in this area, particularly as she will be developing workshops that will address the relationship between the secular and sacred functions of pastors as administrators. One member of the site team has a doctoral degree in education and suggested that all educators, both old and new, would benefit from ongoing training in the methodologies of reaching and teaching a variety of ages groups. For this reason, **the team, together with Vanessa, choose this competency for Vanessa.**

7. Counselor:

Because of the confidential nature of providing counseling, the site team found it more challenging to rate the skill development in this area. Vanessa has not had formal training in the area of counseling, but has taken a variety of seminars on grief counseling and hospital visitation and has had limited experiences in both. Vanessa desires to improve in this area but at this juncture, the time involved in doing so limits her abilities. The site team suggested it may be something to pursue in the future as time permits. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

8. Pastor:

Vanessa sees herself as a pastor, particularly as it relates to the early church role of the laity. While she has touched on all the duties of a pastor, it is not part of her everyday role and responsibility. The congregation has embraced Vanessa as part of the

staff but also acknowledges that pastor is not her primary role. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

9. Spiritual Leader:

Vanessa has demonstrated a strong devotion to spiritual disciplines, including morning devotions, Bible reading, and the like. She has been part of the devotional writing team for over six years, has led the evening devotionals, and facilitates a group in reading the Bible in a year. She has attended the annual pastor retreat and taken part in evangelist training seminars. She readily shares her faith at work, at church, and in her everyday life. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

10. Ecumenist:

Vanessa has experienced other faith traditions including Lutheran, United Methodist, and Roman Catholic. Her current vocational desires are not in headed in this particular direction and for this reason, the team chooses to skip this competency at the present time.

11. Witness or Evangelist:

Vanessa has demonstrated her patience and longing in her witness to her agnostic husband. She embraces the admonition in 1 Peter 3 with respect to her husband and her family. She is bold in her faith and not afraid to speak God's Word, to pray at work as well as in public settings. She uses gentle persuasion in her witness but will not back down when directly challenged about her faith. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

12. Administrator:

Vanessa is a very good administrator. She demonstrates skill in both organizing people and activities. She has had many years as a leader and administrator in her business career, within professional associations, and in ministry. Within the church, she has held various positions of responsibility and has executed them well. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

13. Professional:

Vanessa has demonstrated skills in the area of business professional and has been able to successfully translate those skills into her work with the church. She is extremely organized and is both a good listener and good communicator. While she may need to concentrate a bit more in the area of self-care, her overall professional demeanor and skills do not require additional work at this time. For this reason, the team did not select this competency.

Competencies Selected/Strategies/Evaluation

Preacher

Good preaching consists of faithfully and truthfully interpreting God's Holy Word. But it also demands that the preacher understand their audience, the context of the time and place in which they preach, and how to engage their audience such that spiritual growth and/or curiosity is the result. I want to be this kind of preacher. Not just one who can exegete God's Word correctly, but one that can deliver God's message to God's people in the place that they find themselves. I want to challenge them, encourage them, and create a desire in them to understand the beauty of the scriptures and what it means to live an abundant life fully embraced and embracing all that God offers. I believe that it is

a sacred task and a weighty responsibility but one that can, if done with the right intentions, bear wonderful fruit.

- **Strategy A -** I will seek out three opportunities to preach to different congregations that represent a variety of age groups and cultural backgrounds to help develop my understanding and communication skills.
- **Strategy B -** I will commit to attend the Festival of Homiletics in May of 2023.
- **Strategy C -** I will seek out four to six opportunities to watch and listen to other more experienced preachers of a variety of faith traditions to broaden my own awareness of preaching styles.
- **Evaluation -** I will ask my site team to continue to provide me with feedback after each sermon I preach to see where my growing edges may lay.

Worship Leader

It is not enough to have an understanding of the elements that comprise an effective worship experience. A worship leader must be able to creatively bring all of the pieces of worship (liturgy, music, sermon, prayers, and pacing) together in such a way that those who attend worship experience a communion with God. The goal of worship is to present an offering to God; an offering worthy of the grace, love, and mercy that God extends to us every moment of every day. I want to be able to create a worship space not just on Sunday mornings but also at other places and times that enhance my role as worship leader and bring a positive and loving impact to those who attend.

- **Strategy A -** Two of my site team members, Rev. Lissa Smith and Rev. Leanne Strommen, have offered to teach me their methods of preparation. I am scheduled

with Rev. Smith for the planning of Lent through Pentecost. I will schedule with Rev. Strommen for the planning of a different liturgical season.

- **Strategy B -** After learning from my two experts, I would like to plan several worship experiences from beginning to end.
- **Strategy C -** I will read a book on worship planning in the reformed tradition and/or attend a seminar on reformed worship planning.
- **Evaluation -** I will ask my site team to evaluate a worship event that I plan and provide feedback for future planning.

Religious Educator

God has called me to be an effective leader and in that leading, I must be effective at teaching others. My project requires that I communicate the appropriate union of the sacred with the secular and ergo, becoming an effective religious educator is a critical component. While I have experienced teaching in the secular sphere, my experience in teaching in the religious sphere is not as robust. Furthermore, I believe that engaging people in a learning experience requires the ability to adapt your communication style to your audience and create a feedback learning loop so that the educator is learning as well. I am excited to enhance my skill set in this area and look forward to producing fruit for the Kingdom of God.

- **Strategy A –** Take a seminar offered by the Faith+Lead Academy at Luther Seminary.
- **Strategy B -** Read *Make It Stick* by Brown, P. C., Roediger, H.L., & McDaniel, M. A., a book on the psychology of retention in teaching. Read *The Art of*

Teaching the Bible by Dr. Christine E. Blair. Read *Powerful Teaching,* by Agarwal, P.K. and P.M. Bain, a book on the science of learning.

- **Evaluation -** I will take the information offered in both the seminar and the readings to assist in the content and delivery of the information for the leadership workshops I will offer. I will have workshop attendees complete evaluations for both style and content.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

V. Bates
Preliminary Data for DMin Project

First of all, thank you for completing this brief questionnaire. All answers/comments will be kept confidential. Secondly, there is NO judgment from me in how you respond. I am simply trying to validate anecdotal feedback. PLEASE PUT A CHECK MARK BY YOUR ANSWER.

1. While in seminary, did you take any courses in how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ Yes, but it was not sufficient

   ☐ No

2. Did your internship provide you with this training?

   ☐ Yes, it was sufficient

   ☐ Yes, but it was not sufficient

   ☐ No

Comments:
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses, seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

☐ Yes - If yes, can you state the type of course and its subject matter? _____
_____

☐ No

4. Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? Check all that apply.

   ☐ Workshops

   ☐ Additional educational courses

   ☐ Trial and error

5. Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? Check all that apply.

   ☐ Workshops

   ☐ Additional educational courses

   ☐ Trial and error

   ☐ Don't manage it – I avoid it

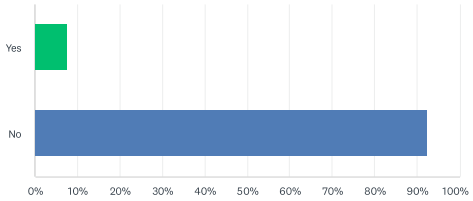
Additional Comments:

_____

_____

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

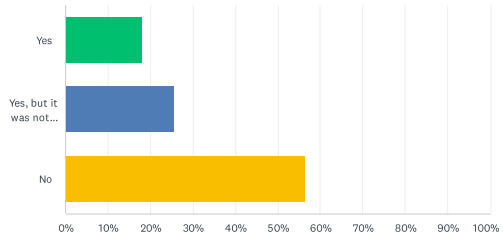
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	7.69%	3
No	92.31%	36
TOTAL		39

Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

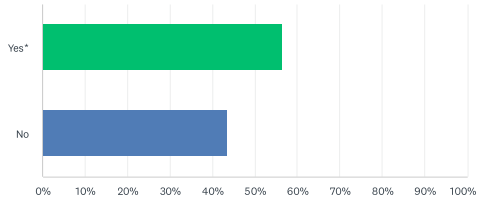
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	17.95%	7
Yes, but it was not sufficient	25.64%	10
No	56.41%	22
TOTAL		39

Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

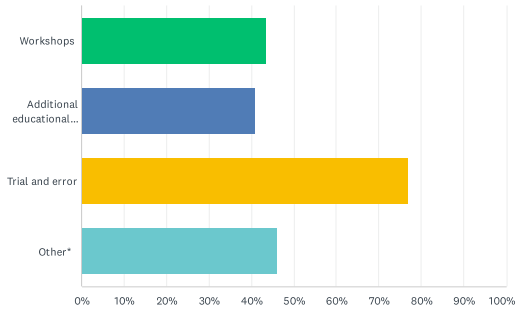
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes*	56.41%	22
No	43.59%	17
TOTAL		39

Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

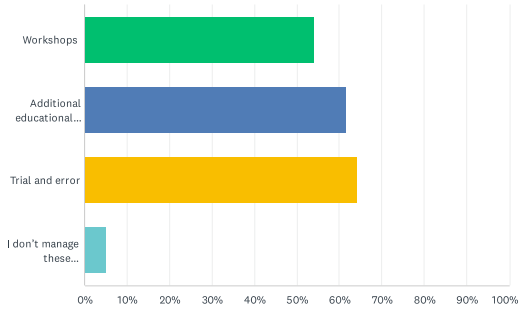
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Workshops	43.59%	17
Additional educational courses	41.03%	16
Trial and error	76.92%	30
Other*	46.15%	18
Total Respondents: 39		

Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Workshops	53.85%	21
Additional educational courses	61.54%	24
Trial and error	64.10%	25
I don't manage these situations, or try to avoid them	5.13%	2
Total Respondents: 39		

Appendix C: Individual Questionnaire Responses

#1

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 12:43:11 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 12:45:18 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:06
IP Address:	172.88.195.33

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes,** Comments: This is just a test.
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : This is just a test
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**I don't manage these situations, or try to avoid them,** Additional Comments: This is just a test

#2

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 3:33:48 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 3:35:24 PM
Time Spent:	00:01:36
IP Address:	68.4.85.111

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**

#3

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:05:51 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:09:34 PM
Time Spent:	00:03:43
IP Address:	68.96.73.165

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : I have an M.B.A. and executive management experience in a corporate setting, having served for 7-years as a bi-vocational pastor before going into full-time pastoral ministry. My management training comes from past practical experience as a manager in a Fortune 100 setting.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error,** **Other*,** *Other (please specify): Staff management comes from prior corporate experience, per above. Volunteer management is Trial and Errot.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Trial and error**

#4

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:39:42 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:47:35 PM
Time Spent:	00:07:52
IP Address:	107.208.193.100

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No,** Comments: My internships were a million years ago and at that time most young pastors were being called into Associate Pastor positions for focused areas of ministry and so any staff or volunteer managment was learned by osmosis.
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : Often, Youth Ministry workshops and continuing education events through Youth Specialties, APCE (Association of Presbyterian Church Educators), PYWA (Presbyterian Youth Workers Association) would have seminars on volunteer management. However, I don't recall many that focused on the particular requirements for paid staff management like payroll, required training, policies, etc.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** **Other*,** *Other (please specify): Thankfully through the patient guidance and wisdom of members of the church who are small business owners themselves or work in the HR field. Also, as an elected school board member I got a great real world experience in all things administrative!

Q5	I don't manage these situations, or try to avoid them,
Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	Additional Comments: Just being honest. My colleagues sometimes have good advice.

#5

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:49:25 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:52:19 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:53
IP Address:	98.189.233.248

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No,

Comments:

I was fortunate to have a business undergraduate degree with an emphasis on HR management because I received nothing on this from seminary.

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

*Other (please specify):

Previous business degree and experience in managing employees at a restaurant.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Additional educational courses,

Additional Comments:

Again, business degree was helpful. Also many books on self differentiated leadership since becoming a pastor.

#6

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 5:06:12 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 11, 2022 5:08:19 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:07
IP Address:	104.4.29.97

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No,

Comments:

I think this is a really good idea. As a pastor, I'm technically the CEO of a non-profit corporation and I don't have a clue what I'm doing!

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

I learned from the good and bad examples of other pastors I've worked with.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

And some bad experiences.

#7

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:00:14 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:01:24 PM
Time Spent:	00:01:09
IP Address:	108.185.93.254

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error**

#8

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:17:36 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:20:31 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:54
IP Address:	107.198.185.15

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes, but it was not sufficient,

Comments:

The internship I did was mostly focused on the "ministry" side of the job. There was no focus on managing staff, but I do recall discussions with the senior Pastor on leading teams of volunteers.

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Learning from Pastors I've worked under and from mentors I've had.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Trial and error

#9

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:20:03 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:25:13 PM
Time Spent:	00:05:09
IP Address:	172.89.34.191

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes, but it was not sufficient,** Comments: My training was very generic.
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : I have learned about it mostly via self taught and by observing other pastor or leaders.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Trial and error,** Additional Comments: And also by reading a good chuck of related and relevant information about the this subject.

#10

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:27:04 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:29:55 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:50
IP Address:	176.177.37.5

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes, but it was not sufficient

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,

*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :

I was part of a new church development cohort under the mentorship of a Synod staffer who was very very good with teaching us about staff relations.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

I think I have a gift for it.

#11

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:27:31 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:31:27 PM
Time Spent:	00:03:56
IP Address:	72.211.26.221

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes, but it was not sufficient,** Comments: I am trying to image what is meant by "manage paid staff and volunteers," because that phrase could include a lot of things. So, Yes I did receive some training in my internship, but one can never have enough training on this topic I feel.
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : I've taken many trainings on working with volunteers, particularly youth leaders and Sun School Teachers.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** *Other (please specify): APCE Mentors On the job experience
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** Additional Comments: I've had opportunities to attend conflict management type workshops and even in the church while serving as a pastor, I have received trainings in this area from my church and presbytery.

#12

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:26:31 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:33:59 PM
Time Spent:	00:07:28
IP Address:	98.164.209.44

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes, but it was not sufficient,** Comments: In 21 years of pastoral ministry, I discovered that not only "management" was important, but developing volunteers to their reach their potential.
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : Almost everything has been through "Network Ministries International" with Bruce Bugbee. Under his leadership, Willow Creek of South Barrington, IL grew from a few thousand volunteers to ~11,000. During that time, he developed processes and systems which equipped volunteers in a caring way that led to them offering their best to God.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

Also, many many books on conflict resolution, beginning with books on having difficult conversations, respectful communications, etc.

#13

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:35:49 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:43:02 PM
Time Spent:	00:07:13
IP Address:	201.175.209.114

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Other*,** *Other (please specify): Prior work experience.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** Additional Comments: Previous work experience in corporate world

#14

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:24:42 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:45:06 PM
Time Spent:	00:20:23
IP Address:	98.148.190.85

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No,
Comments:
One of my internships was in a solo pastor church. I dod not remember any specific training, though it was almost forty years ago. The second internship (back then you had to do two internships) was at a large church where I worked most in the lay counseling ministry (I was an MFT intern).

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No,
*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :
I have attended many workshops, conferences, and retreat, but do not recall a specific on on this topic.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

*Other (please specify):

1. I shadowed a number of pastors and leaders throughout my years in ministry which helped me learn about managing staff and volunteers. 2. I've drawn upon my degrees in psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy to give me insight in working with people in all settings, 3. I served in a church where the focus was on leadership development. The senior pastor implemented the concepts his father had developed during his time as a professor at Fuller. Additionally, I learned through the many books on leadership development that he authored.

Q5	Trial and error,
Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	Additional Comments: I do not currently direct have staff that I manage.

#15

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:39:57 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:45:24 PM
Time Spent:	00:05:26
IP Address:	98.189.227.69

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes, but it was not sufficient,
Comments:
It was 1990

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,
*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :
D. Min Courses on Leadership. Tons of books. Transitional Ministry class through Seattle Presbytery.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Covenant Group in presbytery. Mentored by Senior Pastor, session, personnel committee, past supervisors.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

Tons of books! D. Min class. Therapy.

#16

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:55:20 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 1:02:40 PM
Time Spent:	00:07:20
IP Address:	98.184.250.80

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Other*,** *Other (please specify): Talking with friends and wise mentors has been very helpful. Another thing that has been helpful is working on my own self awareness. Being aware of where I begin and end in relationship with others has been helpful in knowing what is mine and what is yours and what is ours together... if that makes sense! This work is helpful in relationships in every place in my life. As well, Peter Stieinke is an author who offers helpful perspective on boundaries and managing our anxiety.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** Additional Comments: I took a week long course in Conflict Management with Lombard Mennonite. I earned a certificate and have found the class to be extremely helpful. I haven't had occasion to practice larger group conflict management, which was a part of the course. But the one on one skills have been invaluable.

#17

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:55:31 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 1:04:19 PM
Time Spent:	00:08:47
IP Address:	47.157.145.50

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops ,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Coaching/Mentors, Gained skills while serving as a Solo Pastor and Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Discussions and learning from pastor colleagues, Presbytery Workshops, Reading

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

Family Systems Theory workshops, 5 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), Practical Theology courses in seminary, Reading, learning while serving as a pastor, and also I am a certified Enneagram Instructor (Teacher: Clarence Thomson)

#18

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 2:18:44 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 2:27:21 PM
Time Spent:	00:08:37
IP Address:	54.193.1.30

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops ,

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

I learned from conversations with elders and church members who had training in HR and/or other administrative credentials. I also learned from trial and error.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Additional Comments:

I have attended workshops on conflict resolution, but those workshops were largely oriented toward conflict within a congregation rather than specifically focused on conflict within leadership structures of the church.

#19

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 2:41:56 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 2:42:43 PM
Time Spent:	00:00:47
IP Address:	172.88.229.20

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**

#20

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 3:21:06 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 3:25:19 PM
Time Spent:	00:04:13
IP Address:	47.158.208.46

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,

*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :

Workshop as educational department head.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Professional development as a teacher, restaurant manager, learned a LOT by poor example in my first call as an associate.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Additional educational courses,

Additional Comments:

Lombard Peace Institute School of Hard Knocks as an crusts interim

#21

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 7:30:24 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 7:40:18 PM
Time Spent:	00:09:54
IP Address:	108.64.63.118

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : I took seminars and workshops plus I worked during my seminary and before that under ministers with a lot of experience in church management and conflict resolution.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** *Other (please specify): I learn from mentors, ministers with whom I work as a assistant.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses**

#22

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 8:51:00 PM
Last Modified:	Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:06:58 PM
Time Spent:	00:15:58
IP Address:	172.88.226.188

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Work experience. I worked in retail and corporate jobs. I have management experience outside of church. And, by now, I have worked/served at 8 churches prior to my current church. (I know it's hard to tell. I look much younger than my actual age) I have seen good leaders who are great at management of paid staff and volunteers, and I have seen not-so-good ones. I also have good mentors. Seminary was not the only source of my training.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

Same as above

#23

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 12:37:23 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 12:41:53 PM
Time Spent:	00:04:30
IP Address:	98.186.155.169

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No,** Comments: This is a glaring hole in our seminary training!
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Other*,** *Other (please specify): I have selected men and women at each church I have served to function as mentors and guides for me in this area. I have found their secular world experience to be very helpful.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** Additional Comments: Please see my response to question 4. I have also taken Lombard Center training in conflict resolution and management.

#24

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 12:42:29 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 12:44:42 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:12
IP Address:	172.58.22.138

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes, but it was not sufficient**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error,** **Other*,** *Other (please specify): Talking with other pastors, business leaders and reading books.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** Additional Comments: I am also a licensed psychologist, so got much more education on conflict resolution there.

#25

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:00:36 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:02:19 PM
Time Spent:	00:01:42
IP Address:	98.189.248.34

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : Attended several Executive Pastor Conferences that have dealt with a variety of issues related to management of paid staff and volunteers as well as seminars put on by our insurance carrier.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Trial and error**

#26

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 12:34:41 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:10:38 PM
Time Spent:	00:35:56
IP Address:	98.168.108.136

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes, but it was not sufficient,

Comments:
The church I interned at was pretty tiny. I think the only paid staff besides the pastor were the secretary and music director (both part time). I learned a lot, but if my first call had been as a solo pastor for a congregation, I think it would've taken me a while to figure out what the heck I was doing...!

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,

*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :
I attended a couple seminars on church finance and working with volunteers (I don't remember exact dates, but it was in the first 1-3 yrs after seminary). I also did Stephens Ministry Leader training, which I think could be a considered a volunteer management course, at least on some level... I've also done a few management seminars and courses (and a management "book club") through my hospice employer.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops ,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Mentoring from those who already have management experience

Q5	Trial and error,
Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	Additional Comments: I think mentoring has been the most helpful tool for me regarding how to handle conflict.

#27

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:08:43 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:13:27 PM
Time Spent:	00:04:43
IP Address:	47.153.193.10

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes, but it was not sufficient**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : Conflict mediation Kennon Callahan-several multi-day seminars - 12 Keys to an Effective Church.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error,** **Other*,** *Other (please specify): Working under a mentor pastor who saw his task to develop senior pastors
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** Additional Comments: The continuing Ed mentioned above and learning from others. It is a life long discipline

#28

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:17:17 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 1:22:34 PM
Time Spent:	00:05:16
IP Address:	172.58.16.241

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : I did a week long course at Group many, many years ago about how to empower volunteers. This proofed to be very helping in managing volunteers and other paid staff.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** *Other (please specify): I did conflict mediation training that have been helpful. Also doing personality tests and enneagram also gave insights into different work styles.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** Additional Comments: See answer anove

#29

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 2:46:36 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 2:50:59 PM
Time Spent:	00:04:23
IP Address:	23.243.98.29

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No,
Comments:
I did my internships prior to seminary, and while I had broad responsibilities, the "business" of Church regarding people management or financials and budgeting had to be picked up along the way.

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,
*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :
I took a series of Fred Pryor courses on being a manager. Later on, with a consultant, we worked through Patrick Lencioni's 5 Disfunctions of a Team.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:
I took the Peacmaker's training in Conflict Coaching and Mediation (Should have had it in Seminary)

#30

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 2:35:19 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 3:09:07 PM
Time Spent:	00:33:47
IP Address:	76.87.73.192

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes, but it was not sufficient,
Comments:
It was not intentional training. Most of it happened because I saw it happening and was able to ask questions of the pastors and professional staff who were willing to share with me from their experience and perspective.

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,
*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :
Took several workshops along the way that were associated with church leadership conferences, etc. But by far, the most impacting course I took happened toward the end of my time in a full-time position when I came in touch with Dr. Peter Steinke. After reading some of his works on church leadership and family systems and spending time with him in Minnesota, I brought his thinking on working with church staff dynamics and general congregational life in the church to my position as Senior Pastor and found so much I wish I had come across earlier.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops ,

Trial and error

Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** Additional Comments: See above

#31

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 4:02:31 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 4:05:47 PM
Time Spent:	00:03:16
IP Address:	72.219.176.147

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : D.Min course on people management.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**

#32

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 4:31:20 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 4:35:45 PM
Time Spent:	00:04:24
IP Address:	104.175.230.69

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : Two $99 courses with titles such as "Managing Volunteers" / Staff
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** *Other (please specify): Family Systems courses Earned a Masters in Counseling
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** Additional Comments: Bowen's Family Systems Set up an environment for healthy staff relationships and communication

#33

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Monday, May 16, 2022 6:52:04 PM
Last Modified:	Monday, May 16, 2022 6:52:54 PM
Time Spent:	00:00:49
IP Address:	174.193.193.196

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Trial and error**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops**

#34

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 9:03:30 AM
Last Modified:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 9:13:06 AM
Time Spent:	00:09:35
IP Address:	184.179.106.205

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

Yes

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

Yes

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,

*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :

Got my Dmin at Princeton where we spent time working on ministry experiences together that did include pastoral leadership and management

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops ,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Pastor mentors that I have known over the years

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

Presbytery over the years has provided valuable workshops / speakers and leaders who have guided us through key leadership issues. One in particular that was most helpful was the pastors retreat a handful of years ago that included Peter Steinke. His book titled, Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times, go to book. I would also suggest a book produced by the Arbinger Institute titled, Leadership and Self - Deception. I have lead my entire staff through the book which addressed many of the complex issues that pastoral leaders face in managing leaders and volunteers.

#35

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 9:28:25 AM
Last Modified:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 9:38:15 AM
Time Spent:	00:09:50
IP Address:	98.189.248.34

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No,
Comments:
In my experience, internships rarely offer opportunities to manage staff or volunteers. The intern is usually at the bottom on the pecking order, and has to work "in the system." The intern rarely gets to work "on the system."

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

Yes*,
*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter :
The best training is actually Clinical Pastoral Education. CPE offers you a rare gift - honest and impactful feedback from your peers. CPE was essential for me in changing up the tenor and mode of my communications.

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops ,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

*Other (please specify):

There are obviously a ton of books out there, but my favorite is "Good to Great" by Jim Collins. Truly inspirational leaders confront the brutal facts with humility. Doing these two things will get you 90% there as an effective leader.

Q5	**Trial and error,**
Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	Additional Comments: In my experience, there is no classroom that can prepare you for conflict. Effectively managing conflict takes practice, practice, practice. There are some fundamentals that can help, such as sticking to "I statements" rather than "You statements." At the end of the day, however, it's all about speaking the truth in love and hoping for the best.

#36

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 9:42:52 AM
Last Modified:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 9:47:10 AM
Time Spent:	00:04:17
IP Address:	104.173.253.67

Page 1

Q1

While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q2

Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

No

Q3

Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

No

Q4

Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Trial and error,

Other*,

*Other (please specify):

Primary help was serving on a staff with a capable Head of Staff. Also served with an incapable one and so learned what not to do. Ongoing help from wise mentors has been essential.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

Valuable help from Dr. Ed Friedman on Family Systems on a set of CDs when people used to listen to CDs.

#37

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 7:38:08 PM
Last Modified:	Tuesday, May 17, 2022 7:42:22 PM
Time Spent:	00:04:14
IP Address:	68.96.80.107

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : Numerous courses in this area while with a validated ministry through Christian Leadership Assn.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** **Other*,** *Other (please specify): By doing it and processing with peers.
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error**

#38

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:41:31 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:52:24 PM
Time Spent:	00:10:52
IP Address:	23.242.39.147

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**No,** Comments: My internship specified Youth Ministry, Pastoral Care to Youth, CE and Worship Preaching and Leadership. My supervisor in ministry as Head of Staff retained all HR and compensation/benefits decisions with the Session.
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : I have a Professional in Human Resource accreditation. Unfortunately, I did not keep up my certification. However, the knowledge was immensely beneficial. In between pastorates I taught a module from SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) at a university for business majors.
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Additional educational courses,** **Trial and error,** *Other (please specify): (see above) I subscribed to various personnel periodicals for Personnel Handbooks and evaluations. Researched evaluative tools for employee reviews. Ordered a personnel handbook from the GA.

Q5

Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

Workshops,

Additional educational courses,

Trial and error,

Additional Comments:

I have an extensive background in conflict management working with Committee on Ministry, Family Systems therapy both from personal study and required denominational work, mediation training and practice. I have a coaching certificate. I have drawn on my pastoral care experiences to be a good listener.

#39

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:58:20 PM
Last Modified:	Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:00:25 PM
Time Spent:	00:02:04
IP Address:	98.189.248.34

Page 1

Q1 While in seminary, did you take any courses on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?	**No**
Q2 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?	**Yes**
Q3 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?	**Yes*,** *If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course and its subject matter : -Consultants from Best Workplace -Lead Like Jesus Seminar for Managers -Sexual harassment training
Q4 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops ,** **Additional educational courses**
Q5 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)	**Workshops,** **Additional educational courses**

Appendix D: Table of Ministerial Competencies

Ministerial Competency Ratings Grid
Continue - C
Develop But - D
Attention - A
Start - S
Skip - SK
No Basis - NB

Competency	Alan	Jerry	Jim	Leanne	Lissa	Vanessa
Theologian	**C**	C	C/D	C	C	C
Preacher	C	C	D	C	C	D
Worship Leader	C	D	C	C	D	D
Prophetic Agent	NB	NB	A/C	NB	C	C
Leader	D	C	C	C	C	C
Religious Educator	D	D	C/D	NB	D	D
Counselor	D	NB	NB	NB	D/A	D/A
Pastor	C	D	C	C	C/D	C
Spiritual Leader	C	D	C	C	C/D	D
Ecumenist	NB	NB	NB	NB	A	NB
Witness/Evangelist	C	C	C	NB	D/A	C
Administrator	C	C	C	C	C	C
Professional	C	C	C	C	C	C

Appendix E: Timeline for Dissertation

DATE	TASK/ACTIVITY	TOOLS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE TASK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
November 2022	Submit Final Proposal Worship planning	Proposal approved by Site team and Dr. Blair Materials and sources provided by Lissa	Me Me and Lissa S.
November – December 2022	Read and take notes on research areas Religious Educator	Outline each research section. Review and organize all the previous accumulated sources to match outlines. Take seminar Read selected reading materials	Me Me
January – February 2023	Continue reading on research areas Develop first survey for seminary graduates Develop survey for Exe. Pastor interviews Worship Leader Meet with faculty advisor	Use acquired sources and fill in as gaps become apparent. Review information that will help identity educational gaps. Finalize list of participants. Questions that will elicit how they bridge the secular and sacred tasks. Work with Leanne S. on worship planning Review progress to date.	Me Me/Jerry R./Jim B. Me/Alan P., Lissa S. and Leanne S. Me and Leanne S. Me
March 2023	Launch survey Schedule Exe. Pastor interviews Develop Focus group questions Continue research reading and writing	Survey Monkey Zoom platform for recording purposes Information gathered from reading and executive pastor interviews Materials already gathered	Me Me and Site team member Me, Jerry R. and Jim B. Me
April 2023	Follow up on survey	Calculate response rate and determine if more surveys need to be sent out. Select individuals for follow up interviews Zoom platform for recording purposes	Me Me and Jerry R.

	Schedule and conduct Focus group Develop workshop materials Continue research reading and writing Meet with faculty advisor	Utilize previous experience plus reading materials and information gathered from surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Materials already gathered Review progress to date	Me and Site team for review Me Me
May – June 2023	Follow up interviews Teach workshops and gather evaluations Continue Research reading and writing Preacher Meet with faculty advisor	Questions as follow up from survey results. Zoom platform for recording purposes Previously gathered materials Attend Homiletics Festival Review progress to date	Me and Site team member Me and Site team member Me Me
July – August 2023	Analyze and review results from workshops and revise materials as needed. Finish research writing section of dissertation Meet with faculty advisor	Zoom recordings and evaluations Previously gathered materials Review progress to date	Me Me Me
September – December 2023	Review and beginning writing up the results from all previous tasks Meet with faculty advisor	All input from surveys, interviews, workshops, and follow up Review progress to date	Me Me

January 2024	Finish and submit dissertation	Approval from Dr. Blair, Site team, and faculty advisor	Me
March 2024	Defend dissertation	Review all materials	Me
May 2024	Graduation		Me

Appendix F: Proposed Budget

Item	Budgeted Expense	Total
Survey Monkey	$100.00 per month x three months	$300.00
Zoom Platform for Webinar	$690.00	$690.00
Thank-you gifts for interviewees and focus group participants	$50.00 per person anticipated 8-10 people	$500.00
Editor	$50.00 per hour	$2000 - $4000
Seminar Fees	$200.00 per x 2	$400.00
Travel expenses to Seminar	$1500.00	$1500.00
Sum Total		$5360.00 – $7360.00

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Appendix B: Seminary Graduate Questionnaire

Questionnaire for seminary graduates (within the last seven years) who may or may not be currently working in ministry.

First of all, thank you for agreeing to complete this brief questionnaire which will assist me with my Doctor of Ministry project. Your name will be kept confidential. Please complete the informational portion and PLEASE PUT A CHECK MARK IN THE BOX BY YOUR ANSWERS IN THE SECOND PORTION.

1.Name of Seminary _____ Year of graduation _____

2.Degree (please circle): Master of Arts in Theology
Master of Divinity
Other (please specify) _____

3.Current Occupation _____ Years at Occupation _____

Gender (optional) _____

4. While in seminary, did you take any leadership courses or workshops on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ Yes, but they were not sufficient

   ☐ No

5. Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

   ☐ Yes, and it was sufficient

   ☐ Yes, but it was not sufficient

   ☐ No

Comments: _____
_____
_____

6. Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educational courses, or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

   ☐ Yes*

   ☐ No

*If you answered "Yes", please state the type of course or seminar and its subject matter:

_____

7. Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

   ☐ Workshops

   ☐ Additional educational courses

   ☐ Trial and error

   ☐ Other _____

   ☐ I have no staff or volunteers to manage in my current position

8. Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staff and/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

   ☐ Workshops

   ☐ Additional educational courses

   ☐ Trial and error

   ☐ I don't manage these situations, or I try to avoid them

   ☐ I have no staff or volunteers to manage in my current position

Comments:_____
_____

9. I would be interested in attending seminars via Zoom or some similar platform in the following areas: (Please check all that apply)

    ☐ Hiring, including job description development and interview techniques

    ☐ How to hold staff and volunteers accountable while maintaining pastoral authenticity

    ☐ When, how, and what to delegate

    ☐ Managing conflict between yourself and staff/volunteers and between others under your supervision

    ☐ Understanding the basics of church finances

10. I would be willing to be interviewed via Zoom.

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

If yes, please provide me with your name and the best contact information:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you again for taking the time to assist me with my doctoral dissertation on leadership.

Appendix C: Monkey Survey Seminary Graduate Questionnaire Responses

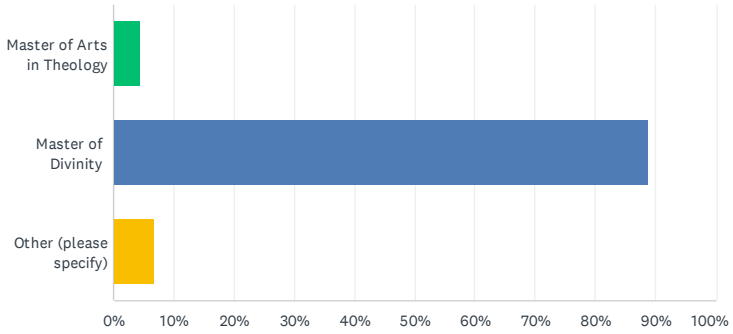
Q1 Name of Seminary and Year of graduation

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name of Seminary	100.00%	44
Year of graduation	100.00%	44

Q2 Degree

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Master of Arts in Theology	4.55%	2
Master of Divinity	88.64%	39
Other (please specify)	6.82%	3
TOTAL		44

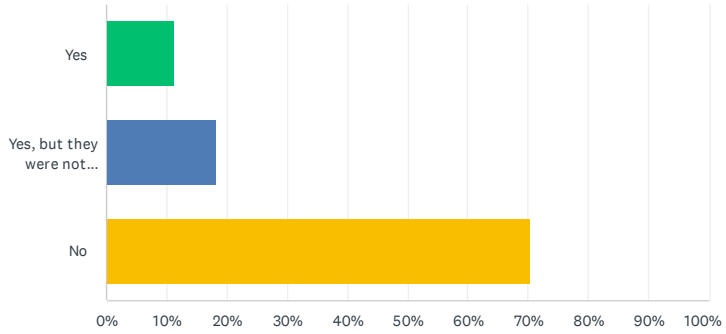
Q3 Current Occupation, Years at OccupationGender (Optional)

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Current Occupation	100.00%	44
Years at Occupation	100.00%	44
Gender (Optional)	90.91%	40

Q4 While in seminary, did you take any leadership courses or workshops on how to manage paid staff and volunteers?

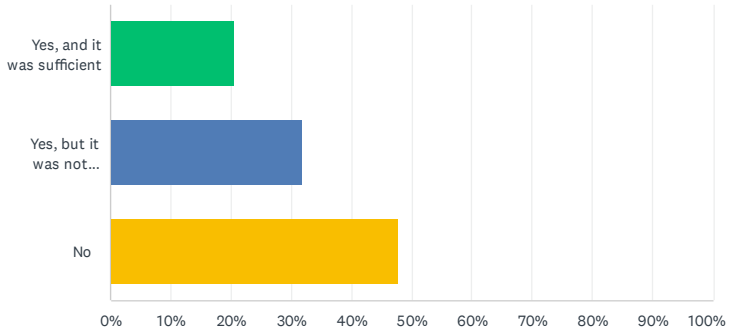
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	11.36%	5
Yes, but they were not sufficient	18.18%	8
No	70.45%	31
TOTAL		44

Q5 Did your internship provide you with any of this training?

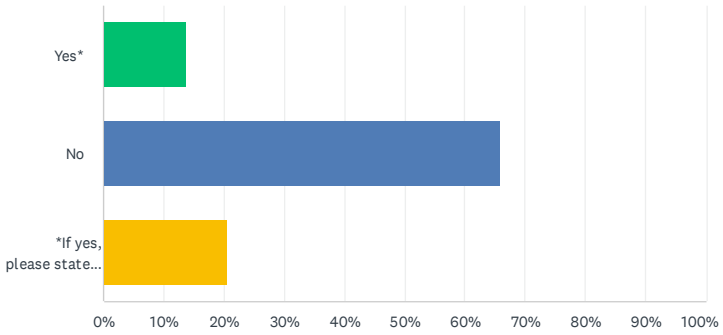
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, and it was sufficient	20.45%	9
Yes, but it was not sufficient	31.82%	14
No	47.73%	21
TOTAL		44

Q6 Since seminary, have you taken any workshops, additional educationalcourses, or seminars in the management of paid staff and volunteers?

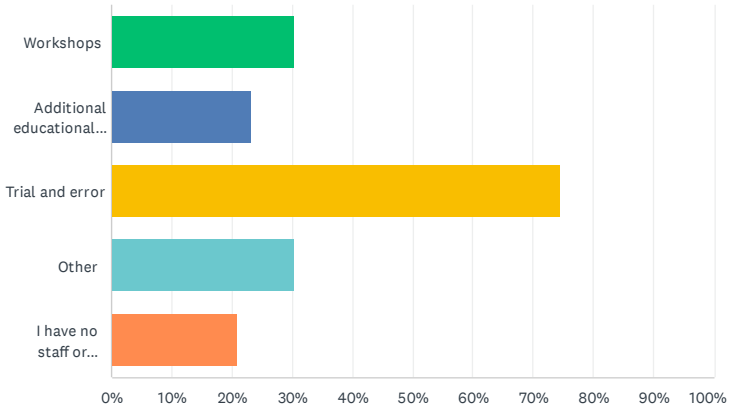
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes*	13.64%	6
No	65.91%	29
*If yes, please state the type of course or seminar and its subject matter:	20.45%	9
TOTAL		44

Q7 Where have you learned to manage staff and volunteers? (Please check allthat apply)

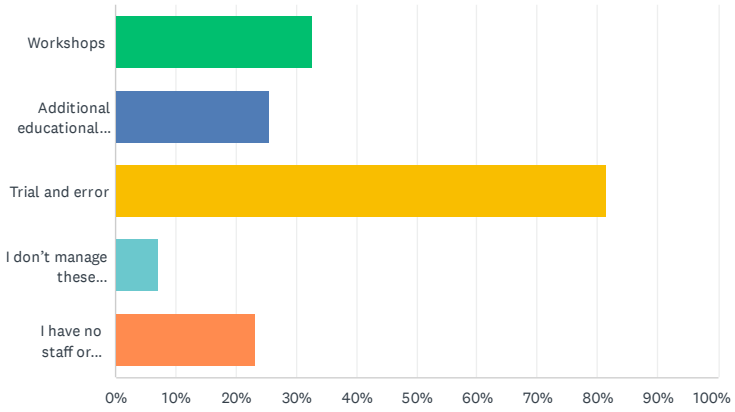
Answered: 43 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Workshops	30.23%	13
Additional educational courses	23.26%	10
Trial and error	74.42%	32
Other	30.23%	13
I have no staff or volunteers to manage in my current position	20.93%	9
Total Respondents: 43		

Q8 Where have you learned to manage situations of conflict with your staffand/or volunteers? (Please check all that apply)

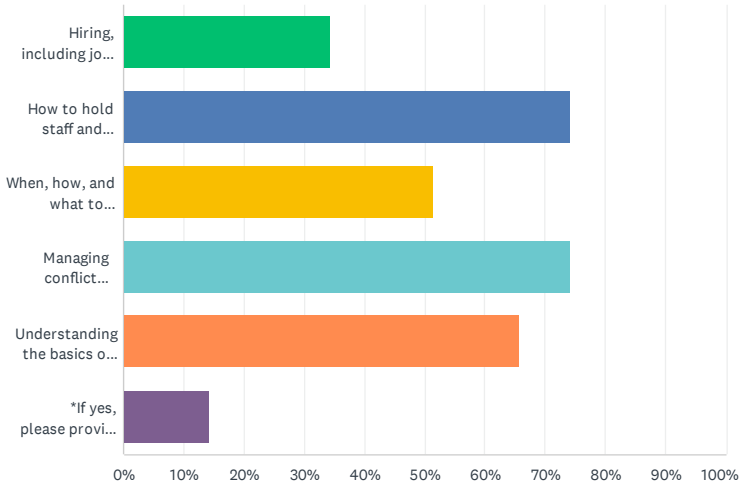
Answered: 43 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Workshops	32.56%	14
Additional educational courses	25.58%	11
Trial and error	81.40%	35
I don't manage these situations, or I try to avoid them	6.98%	3
I have no staff or volunteers to manage in my current position	23.26%	10
Total Respondents: 43		

Q9 I would be interested in attending seminars via Zoom or some similarplatform in the following areas: (Please check all that apply)

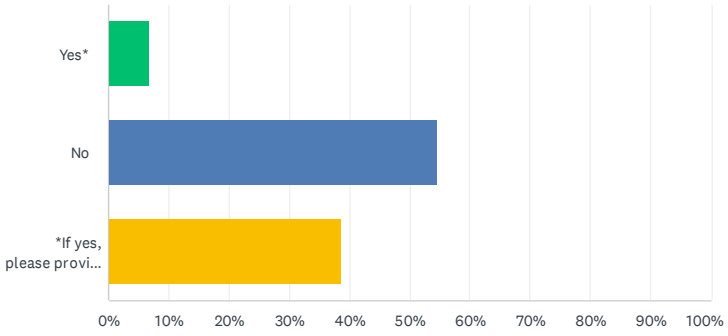
Answered: 35 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hiring, including job description development and interviewtechniques	34.29%	12
How to hold staff and volunteers accountable while maintainingpastoral authenticity	74.29%	26
When, how, and what to delegate	51.43%	18
Managing conflict between yourself and staff/volunteers andbetween others under your supervision	74.29%	26
Understanding the basics of church finances	65.71%	23
*If yes, please provide me with your name and the best contact information: please specify	14.29%	5
Total Respondents: 35		

Q10 I would be willing to be interviewed via Zoom.

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes*	6.82%	3
No	54.55%	24
*If yes, please provide me with your name and the best contact information:	38.64%	17
TOTAL		44

Appendix D: Recent Seminary Graduate Interview Transcriptions

Pastor Interview #1

Vanessa: OK. I'd like to open with a quick word of prayer, "Gracious and almighty God, thank you so much for this opportunity to talk to [Interviewee] and learn more about her call and her work in your kingdom. Let all of the work we do, Lord, be for your glory in your name. We pray, amen." Right? So just a few preliminary questions. Where are you located?

Interviewee: I'm in [City], [State]. It's the western part of [State], about two hours from [City], two hours from [City], and two hours from [City].

Vanessa: That's true with all those states. My daughter lives in McLean, Virginia, right inside the beltway. Seems like they can drive everywhere there on the east coast.

Interviewee: We're right across the river from [State], so we're kind of in that little area.

Vanessa: Given that you graduated from [University Name], am I safe in assuming that you took a PC USA call?

Interviewee: Yes.

Vanessa: OK. And how large is your church?

Interviewee: We have around 125 members on the rolls.

Vanessa: And in worship?

Interviewee: And in worship, around 60 in worship.

Vanessa: That seems to be the 50% mark; it's almost universal. Is this your first call?

Interviewee: No, it's my second.

Vanessa: Can you tell me what your first call consisted of?

Interviewee: I was at [Church Name] of [City], [State], colloquially named [Church]. I started as an associate for four years, then the head of staff left, and I became acting head of staff for about three years before taking this call.

Vanessa: You're a solo pastor in this church, correct?

Interviewee: Correct.

Vanessa: OK. Do you mind giving me an overview of what your responsibilities are, either weekly or monthly, however you want to define that?

Interviewee: Sure, I have lots responsibilities to the staff, so weekly staff meetings. We have a staff of five, so meet regularly and keeping track of building use and all the different things. We have a nursery school on our property, so during the week there are kids in our building from about 8:30 AM until noon, Monday through Friday. And so, arrangements with that, working with the nursery school director. I do try to attend most of the committee meetings that we have however they know I can't make everything. So I try to be involved in that. So I moderate the session, preach weekly, obviously, help design worship with our Director of Music Ministries, do pastoral visits, home communions, lots of different things. Work with our mission partners, try to stay involved with those so that I'm aware, you know, of the work that's being done. And just recently, there's a group of faith-based addiction help in our community to provide kind of a support system for those in our community who struggle with addictions of different kinds. And so just got involved with that. And then the interfaith, interfaith clergy group in town. So those are, that's a basic, I know there's a whole bunch of stuff I forgot, but that's, you know, that's the, so I've always been that way. I'm always a little too busy for my own good.

Vanessa: So, I have five paid staff. How many elders?

Interviewee: We have 13 elders.

Vanessa: Oh, that's a lot for your church size. How about...

Interviewee: Yeah, but they're, they're all active and engaged. And the nice thing about having 13 elders is we have two that co-chair each committee. So, there's two elders co-chair each committee and then they kind of organize those committees. That's why I don't have to go everywhere all the time. And then the 13th position is our clerk of session which rotates. So, that allows for the clerk of session to first of all have a vote and then, to, you know, to be refreshed and not, you know, not feel like they're stuck in that role because I know sometimes, you know, the previous church I served, the clerk of session had been the clerk of session since the early two thousands and he hated it. So, you know, thank, you know, so I'm like, I'm grateful to have like people who want to learn and want to do it well. So that's exciting.

Vanessa: That's great. And how many deacons do you have?

Interviewee: We don't have any deacons.

Vanessa: Really?

Interviewee: Really? Yeah. And I don't think they've ever had deacons in this congregation.

Vanessa: I don't think I've ever come across a PC USA that didn't have at least one or two deacons. That's interesting. So, who's responsible for the care of the congregation in that capacity? The way deacons are normally responsible for the care and compassion piece.

Interviewee: One of our committees is congregational care and outreach. And so, they take, they function as the deacons. So, they send the cards, they do the visits, they arrange flowers for the home bound. So that's, that's their committee.
Vanessa: Interesting. Would you say the average age of your congregation leans to the older?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I'd say probably 70% of our congregation is over the age of 50.

Vanessa: OK. I think that's the typical profile for us PC USA churches. When you, when you have your meetings with your staff, are they formalized? Do you have an agenda or is it more ad hoc?

Interviewee: It is ad hoc. I, I find that building relationships with the staff has been most important and feeling like that line of communication is open all the time. So basically, it's, it's reports by person. And then any building use, you know, request or, or challenges we discuss as a whole. But everyone kind of gets to say this is what I need this week or this upcoming week. And that's, that's how we do it. They usually last 30 to 45 minutes.

Vanessa: And when you were hired, did they give you a really clearly defined job description?

Interviewee: I think they did. I know I read so I know I read it. I, I, I'm sure I have one.

Vanessa: I love your candor, by the way. Thank you.

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. Well.

Vanessa: How about for your staff? Do you have clearly defined job descriptions for each of your staff?

Interviewee: We do. Yeah.

Vanessa: And who wrote those?

Interviewee: The personnel committee.

Vanessa: And are they updated all the time or have they existed pretty much the same?

Interviewee: They actually do update them pretty often. They, I know they updated the Sexton position within the last year. We just hired our Director of Music Ministry. She was our previous director of music ministries, but she took five years off in retirement and then came back. But she, so that, that job description has been written within the time that I've been there. I think they're, personnel looked through our office manager's job description and she, they updated some duties in there that, that were not being done or, and changed some things around, you know, as the jobs change. And the nursery school is kind of a weird piece because we're, they're like their own thing. But they're like, she's on our staff but not paid by us and, and so it's, it's, it's own separate thing.

Vanessa: Right. That's pretty typical, I think.

Interviewee: Mhm. Yeah.

Vanessa: So, on your survey, you had indicated that you were interested in classes or seminars on staff and volunteer accountability, conflict, and church finance in those three areas. Is there any of those three areas that you feel are more important or less important?

Interviewee: So, I, I think, the finance one, I have a really strong finance team right now. Lots of, lots of people that's not as important for me. The conflict management? Uh, we've had a bit of conflict, uh, in my tenure, just mostly around personality clashes and nothing, it, it's nothing program related. It's interpersonal, which is often the case. And so, those are really interesting to me because it's hard to manage conflict when so many people kind of get the shrapnel from it. And, and so there's been challenges with that. And then the, the managing volunteers and staff, I think we have one of our staff members who I would say is maybe underperforming. But, and I, and we, we've been, you know, personnel and I have been working on how do we motivate this person? How do we, you know, how do we give them the tools to succeed? And if we were to do that, would they succeed? And if that doesn't change, if things don't change, what do we, what's the next steps? So, I think, you know, I think evaluating staff in a way that's, you know, gives them some grace and allows them to grow and, and, and change and, and do their jobs better. But also I think something about knowing when's the right time to let someone go or to change their job description, you know, I think that that's, that's always a tricky subject, especially in the church world because we want to be like, "Oh, you know, it, we, you know, we love God and, and so we, we love all people," but there's something about being in a job position where you have a job description and you're expected to perform those duties that you have to, you have to be held accountable to the work that you're being paid to do. So, yeah.

Vanessa: In the area of conflict, have you had conflict within your staff particularly, or volunteers, or both, or just congregational conflict. Not just because believe me, we've had that and that can be horrible, but...

Interviewee: No conflict in the staff, the staff was very, very cohesive. But there is some conflict with actually a member of session. And, and that personality has, has bled

over into a lot of things. They're, they're kind of interconnected in a lot of places. And, and so any time there's one complaint, there's five complaints. And then everyone's saying, “Did you hear what, what he said?,” you know, so that's the main conflict is actually a sitting elder, which is also a challenge.

Vanessa: And you have six-year terms or you do, you try to rotate them in the three-year term?

Interviewee: We, we have three with the option of six. But most people sign up for a second term. But we do, there are times where people just don't have the energy. I, I had a woman that did a, she, we had a one-year term open and she said I will do one year and no more and she did a great job the year she was there. But I, I respect people like that who are like, I know I can give you a year, but I'm not, I'm not committing to signing on past that. But I think, I think most people when they choose to go on session because it is a big choice and it's, and it's a big commitment. I think they usually kind of recognize that unless something really drastic happens, they want to, they want to continue serving once they get the hang of it by three years, they kind of start to get the hang of it and they wanna continue on. I have one, I have one elder. He's not currently serving. This is his, uh, fallow year, if you will. But he just rotates on and on and he loves to serve and he's so active and engaged and cares so deeply about it that like, you know, I, I'm like, should we tell him he has to wait even longer and try to get another person on or do we allow this person to rotate back on and serve, you know, the Lord with gladness. I don't know. It's, it's a hard, it's a hard to know the right balance.

Vanessa: Does your nominations talk to you about elder selection?

Interviewee: Mhm. Yeah, I meet with them. Since I'm still fairly new, I've been there a year and a half, I, I do value a lot of the, the opinions of, uh, or the history behind it, but I also don't want them to get so stuck in, "So, and so served on this committee before. What if we asked them to do that again?" I, I try to try to bring in a different perspective of you know, well, who else could serve in that capacity and do it well, and maybe hasn't been an elder before. We had, we just nominated a new elder. We had kind of a tragic situation and one of our members who was elected to session at our January meeting suddenly passed away in the beginning of February. And so, we had a vacancy before she was able to be installed. And so, the nominating committee had to find someone to fill that position. And, you know, and we found someone who has been an active member of the congregation for a long, long time, but has never served on session. And so, I'm excited to, you know, connect her in, in this way. So, you know, I think it's good whenever you're able to identify people who may just need that special nudge that extra nudge to get on session.

Vanessa: Do you have, besides theological training, do you have actually job training for your elders so that they understand what's required at them?

Interviewee: I'm not great at that. I will admit that, that is not something that, because I was as an associate for so long, that I never did that part of it. So, I'm actually developing

that now. So, what I did last year was kind of like a one-off class of like, you know, "Here's what the session is responsible to do and then you know, work with your, your co-leader, your co-elder to, kind of figure out what's, what's the stuff that, that needs to be done in your committee." And that's, you know, that's kind of how we've been operating. It's been kind of like, you know, the committee is kind of helping push the elders forward. I, I know that there's more that can be done but I also haven't found anything that I particularly love in the training. You know, I don't wanna just bring people and, you know, here's the information. I want, I want them to engage with it in a different way and I haven't found anything that seems to do that quite yet. And so, if you have any recommendations, I'd love that. But um,

Vanessa: That is a challenge and we, we actually have a co-elder model, too. This is the only other church I've ever heard who has that. So, it's interesting and we just went to that two years ago because we found that some of our elders, we have 12 elders, were, they were just floundering because they just, they wanted to do whatever their task assignment, whatever their area of assignment was. But they just, either they'd never run a meeting, they didn't know how to gather committee members, they didn't know how to hold the committee members responsible. All of those things were issues for them. And as I was observing this, which is part of the reason why I'm doing my project on these areas. But we started trying to do a mentoring program with people who had been in that position prior to, who were currently not on session, but had done the job and had, we had been, we had felt the pastoral staff felt that they had done a good job. And so that helped. It didn't help all of them, but it did help some of them. So, I think mentoring can be really helpful. You just have to make sure that whoever's doing the mentoring really does have that skill level and the willingness that doesn't take, we found, it didn't take very long actually. And the hardest part was helping them get committees because they were just like, "Well, I'll just do it."

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Vanessa: And now you're not allowing other people to develop. Nor are you developing future elders? So that's, it is, I'm gonna address it in my training. But believe me, it's a stumper for everybody. So don't feel bad. Is there anything that you wish when you had gone to (I'm sorry, my computer keeps sending me emails) when you had gone to seminary that you, do you wish that they had trained you in or provided classes in that they did not? And that because of that you felt a little less equipped as a pastor?

Interviewee: Yeah. Most of that stuff I figured out in my previous call. So, it, it was kind of nice coming, like, kind of more fully formed as a pastoral identity into this call. But when I first came out of seminary, I knew nothing about budgets and I knew nothing about, you know, financial sheets and, you know, how to, how to understand pledging income versus regular income and all of the, you know, all of the things on, you know, a ledger's sheet and all kinds of things. And so, I was just like, I, I didn't do it, until, until [Pastor Name] left and I had to as the acting head of staff. So that was a quick learning curve for me. I think, I think that that was the main one. It was a lot of having to do with the finances of a church. And to be, feel confident in leading people and not just, you

know, what does it mean to be faithful in finances versus, you know, because my previous call was in a very, very affluent community in [State] and everyone was in business. And so, everyone on finance were business people and they wanted to treat everything in the church like a business. We got, we have got to grow our, our pledges by a certain percentage in order to be, you know, to be, to prove that we're worth, you know, being the church. And, so I think like a class on, on framing finances for churches or, you know, just understanding those, some of those administrative tasks and what is the pastors to do and what should you let your elders and, and staff do? So, I think that was the primary one for me, was definitely the financial piece. Because I just never had thought about it in that way or, or had to look at those sheets and understand, you know, endowment versus restricted funds versus, you know, regular income. And, so I think that's an interesting thing as a long-winded answer.

Vanessa: No, I mean, but it's sad but true. I mean, even some seasoned pastors who've been in the pastor for a long time, they rely on their elders who are usually people from business or, or have business training and, and that's ok because the elders, you know, should be doing that type of work. But if the pastor doesn't have an understanding, then they can be hoodwinked pretty easily.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah.
Vanessa: So, also,

Interviewee: Oh, go ahead.

Vanessa: No, no, please.

Interviewee: Well, I, my, my previous head of staff, he was a control freak and so, like he, he did everything and there, there were some things I found out after he left that I was like, he was really kind of wiggling these funds around and taking advantage of things like he did. I don't think he directly, you know, did anything that was completely illegal but looking at some of the things that I was like, well, if someone were looking very closely at this, they might ask him questions about why his buddy got an extra $1000 to come preach one Sunday, you know. So, things like that where it's just like, you know. Yeah. So, it's, it's things like that where it's not, like, directly, like, you know, so, and it's just interesting, the pastors that really love to have their fingers all over that and, and who's a little bit more? I'm, I'm definitely a little more hands-off. I try to let everyone lead but I want to look at the books and know, you know, the accounting and things like that and, and be clear on, you know, what's expected pledge-wise and if there's an issue with that, you know, if the pledges are behind, why is that? Do I, I reach out to the people who know who's pledging and what they're giving and then if there's maybe a pastoral issue there. So, like that type of thing, that I try to focus on.

Vanessa: Did you, uh, have any significant changes since COVID, uh, changes either in how you run the church or financially, any, anything major that I know a lot of churches went through? I mean, we did through a major shift because we were closed for a while. But then we came out of it and it's really only been this year that things are

starting to sort of feel like they used to but not quite. And I don't think we'll ever be quite the same.

Interviewee: I have an interesting perspective because I started COVID in [State] and I ended COVID. I know it's not quite gone, but, here. So, I came in while they were still in protocol. Like, you know, my installation service, we were masked, you know. So, I think that as far as worship is concerned, we're pretty close to back to how things were minus communion. And, but I, what I find is that because of COVID, people have embraced online giving or, or giving electronically, which actually helps because it's not dependent on you being there to put your money in the plate. You know, it helps people to commit to that in a different way. But I do think that it, it helped us to think differently about what is church and, and why do we do it? And how can we still do that when we're not physically together or you know, or with the congregation I serve now. They actually had livestream presence like long before COVID. Yeah, so they, I think the early teens they started though, I, I don't know the exact time but they were doing livestream before COVID happened. And so, you know, I think that, that having that knowledge and that ability really allowed them to kind of stay consistent through the pandemic when they weren't able to meet. And to, they also had an interim at that time. So, you know, it was, they had a lot of things fighting against them, but they were able to succeed through that. So, and I, I, I do feel like it's a very vibrant congregation even with the older population.

Vanessa: So, one last question because I'm trying to keep within my 30-minute time window.
Interviewee: I'm talking a lot. I apologize.

Vanessa: No, no, that's, I want you to talk a lot. That's good. I shouldn't be talking, you should be talking. So, as you think just theologically, is there any theological examples from scripture that you rely on in your leadership?

Interviewee: I mean, one of my favorite Bible verses is just you know, "Be joyful, always pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus," 1 Thessalonians 5:16 through 18. And I think that that, well, particularly this last Sunday with full of humor, we really went all in on the Holy humor. And I loved it. So, I think not taking myself too seriously, but taking God seriously and allowing our faith to grow out of some of our questions and to, to be people who are very inclusive of all persons and welcome and embrace in a way that is not performative. That is, you know, is allowing people to be vulnerable in the space. And, and allowing God's love to be the base, that is the comfort zone for them to land in. And that's, I, theologically, I'm, I'm all about God's love. And, and God's love, not, not in our shame, you know, and, and in God's love and the work that God has done to create us into beloved humans and allowing us to be beloved. So, I think theologically then, because we are so loved, we get to share joy with the world. And, and that's kind of my, I guess theological treatise, if you will. You know, I've never, yeah, I've never really formulated it into words before. So that was the first time kind of coming up with what is my, you know, I, my call story is based on, you know, whenever my home church was having kind of conflict over a, an adult with developmental disabilities who wanted to be baptized and they were like, "He's

just doing it. He wants money, blah, blah, blah," all these things, but, but God was calling [Name] and, and all of God's children need to know that they're loved and claimed by God and there's space for them. So, I think that's kind of my biggest, you know, this, we, we try to limit God's love and, and I think it's, it's a detriment to God, so, but not that God can't overcome it. But that's, that's my theological point.

Vanessa: I'm ever in your city, I'm gonna come to your church.

Interviewee: Sure. You're more than welcome. Yeah. It's kind of out of the way. So, to be here would be, you know, kind of, it's unless you're driving through because you said you have, uh, a, a child in the, the Beltway. So, I mean, if you're ever in the beltway and then want to drive to like Ohio or West Virginia, you, you'd come past, you'd come through us. We're right off of [Interstate].

Vanessa: Ok, great.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: Is there anything else anything else you that I didn't ask you that you would want to share with me?

Interviewee: I don't think anything.

Vanessa: Ok, great. I wanna thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it because you're on my email list when I get to the point where I'm scheduling workshops, which will probably be summertime because that seems to be the best time. That's what I'm hearing from people to take additional classes and things like that. It's too difficult, obviously, up to Holy Week and then you've got Pentecost and you know, then September, you've got all new things leading up to Advent and et cetera. So, anyway, yeah, so likely to be summertime. So, I'm, I'm gonna ask you if you don't mind to close us with a word of prayer.

Interviewee: Holy God, we are so grateful for your love and for the ways that you call each of us to learn and grow and change the world for the better. I pray that you would bless Vanessa with the work that she is called to do. That you would give her the understanding and the knowledge to move forward and to help serve this broader church in a way that helps change lives on a small scale that makes a big impact. Be with each of us this day as we seek to serve you with our whole being and to love the world that you love through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Vanessa: Amen. And thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Interviewee: You're welcome. Have a great day.

Pastor Interview #2

Vanessa: So, I'd like to open us with prayer before I start asking you questions if that's OK with you?

Interviewee: Great.

Vanessa: Gracious Lord, thank you so much for the willingness of [Interviewee] to spend some time with me so that I can continue to work on this project for the betterment of your kingdom, Lord. Be with us this morning as we just chat for a few minutes. We ask your blessing in our time in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Interviewee: Amen.

Vanessa: Ok, [Interviewee], so tell me, did you tell me what denomination you are?

Interviewee: I'm PC USA, as well.

Vanessa: OK. How big is your church? How many members do you have?

Interviewee: We have 1200 members.

Vanessa: Wow!

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: That is huge. And in worship, how many do you normally have?

Interviewee: Like 350 or so?

Vanessa: And so, in today's day and age, particularly after COVID, that's a pretty big-sized church. So, you must be part of a team of pastors at your church. Is that correct?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. So, I'm actually a resident minister here. So, our church has one of these residency programs where folks in their first call out of seminary are here for two years in a, you know, kind-of, learning and working role.

Vanessa: That's great.

Interviewee: So, yeah, so I'm one of, we have six pastors on staff.

Vanessa: Can you just describe briefly to me that organizational structure?

Interviewee: Mhm. Yeah. So, we have our lead pastor that's the head of staff, and then there are three associate pastors, and then there are two resident ministers. And so, yeah. And that's so, so the associate pastors, there's an associate pastor for mission and resident

ministry who, who oversees our thing, an associate pastor for pastoral care and congregational life and an associate pastor for youth and families. And yeah,

Vanessa: That's quite an organization you've got there. And is your senior pastor male or female?

Interviewee: Male.

Vanessa: Mhm. Ok. Can you give me an idea of what your responsibilities are? You know, just kind of generally, whether it's daily, weekly, monthly as a resident parish pastor?

Interviewee: Yeah. So, I, I work with our, our young adults like twenties and thirties group. I also work with our college students, our "UKIRK" group. I have a, a role in a lot of, in a lot of different parts of the program area. So, I work with our refugee resettlement ministry within the mission stuff. I, the, the resident ministers kind of take responsibility for our early morning service on Sunday. So, I, I preach and lead worship pretty regularly in that space and then sometimes preach also in the, in the larger space. I'm the point person for a couple work groups which are smaller subsections under committees. So, so our social justice work group and our diversity and inclusion work group as well. So, I'm, I, I have a foot in a lot of different things and kind of no particular area where it's like, "Oh yeah, she's the main person for this." But, but kind of work in a lot of different areas. That's a, a couple of things I do. But, you know, also the general, all the random things you do as a pastor.

Vanessa: And who do you report to?

Interviewee: I report to one of our associate pastors who's the, the person who does mission and resident ministry stuff.

Vanessa: Ok. When you were hired, did, or brought on as a resident, did you have a formalized description of duties?

Interviewee: Yes. But it was extremely vague.

Vanessa: Ok. Hm. And when, do you have regular, meetings, one-to-ones, whatever you wanna call them with whomever, whichever associate is in charge of your programs?

Interviewee: Yes.

Vanessa: And how often do those occur?

Interviewee: We have those on the books once a week. I think they actually happen more like every other week and kind of varies how much. It's, uh, it's pretty rare actually for that to be a, like, "Let's check in about how work is going" kind of things. It's more often kind of like, "Oh, let's talk about this general topic of something that's coming up in

the life of the church," or that time is designed to be, I think a space for kind of mentoring and looking towards what are the bigger things you should be learning in your first call and in your work and stuff. But it very often is sort of, uh, just a random smattering of some things that are, you know, loose ends, halfway figured out.

Vanessa: So there's no, as I'm listening to you talk, would I be correct in assuming there's no like formalized agenda or you don't go in with, "These are the three things I want to talk about?" It's just more an open conversation?

Interviewee: Sometimes there is a bit of an agenda, but it's often a pretty, a pretty loose structure of something.

Vanessa: Who sets that, you or the associate?

Interviewee: The associate pastor sets that.

Vanessa: And are you made aware of what those agenda items are prior to the meeting?

Interviewee: Yeah, like the night before we'll get sent something that's like, "Here's what we'll talk about tomorrow."

Vanessa: Ok. Does that work for you?

Interviewee: No, not often. No.

Vanessa: Can you tell me why?

Interviewee: You know, there's just that it would be helpful to have a better sense of, of what we're gonna cover and what I might be able to proactively say, "We need some space to discuss this as well," kind of thing. But it often becomes a little bit of a, a last minute, "Oh, no, there's so many things going on. Let's just throw this together." And, so, so we, I mean, it, it works ok. But I think it often feeds into the, the culture of, "Oh, my gosh, we're really behind," where, you know, everybody's frantic, "I just do this thing together. Hope it's ok," “Here we go.” Rather than I think it often means they're kind of, it's unclear how long the meeting's gonna last and when, what we're gonna get through and can feel kind of open ended.

Vanessa: Is that the culture would you say, in general, of how the church leadership functions?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah.

Vanessa: Have you ever, how long have you been there now?

Interviewee: I've been there coming up on two years. So, I started in August 2021.

Vanessa: Have you ever thought about being so bold as to maybe, a week in advance, sending your own list of items that you feel would be helpful for you to cover?

Interviewee: I have, I have done that a couple of times when there have, when there have been thing, you know, bigger things where it's like, "No, this really needs to get done." We'll, we'll, we'll get to that sometimes.

Vanessa: OK, the people that you are kind of charged with those little subgroups you talked about - social justice is one of them - and there was, another one. How do you manage those groups?

Interviewee: Yeah. So, both of those are very chaotic because it's unclear within the organizational structure where exactly they're supposed to land and what their leadership is supposed to look like. They were things that I was sort of handed when I started with the unclear expectations. I feel like I'm just complaining about things being chaotic. But...

Vanessa: What you do is be honest.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Vanessa: Nobody will ever know what you say.

Interviewee: ...So, so both the Diversity and Inclusion group and the Social Justice groups were things that were started within a couple months before I began my position. And that was not clear to me when I started, they, they were sort of presented to me as, "Oh, these are, these are well established." And so, they both fall under other committees. So, like the diversity and inclusion is a subgroup of the Congregational Life committee. So, there's a, there's a member of session who is also sits on the Congregational Life committee, who is the chair of the Diversity and Inclusion group. She's very uncomfortable with that role and feels like she doesn't have the skills or the experience in that particular area to, to lead a lot of that. So, our dynamic is very often where I, as the staff person and as someone younger and who's been in seminary when we've been talking about a lot of diversity inclusion, kind of things often becomes, we'll meet a week before the meeting and she'll kind of go, "Oh, I don't know what I'm doing. Could you just come up with what we do?" I, you know, and, and we've kind of worked on that dynamic over the, over the last year really, once I was more established in that role to try to, where I've tried to kind of empower her towards, "You have ideas too and we can do this together." But that often doesn't, doesn't actually happen very well. You know, it, I think it often falls back to, "Oh, I'm just overwhelmed. I don't really know what I'm doing and, and you do a good job when you do it. So could you just do it and I'll support whatever you come up with."

Vanessa: Sounds familiar.

Interviewee: And that's a, that's a similar dynamic in the social justice group. With some of that too.

Vanessa: Speaking of your elders. So how many sit on your session?

Interviewee: I think we have 30 or so. It might be a few under, between 25-30.

Vanessa: Does your senior pastor, associate pastor, someone in the top of the leadership organization, provide training for the elders.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. They have about six weeks I wanna say of a, a little class that they go to, you know, once a week before they are ordained and installed that could change through polity. And it's, it's mostly polity. A little bit of kind of structured like logistical dynamics of the church, you know, how to submit a work order for things and stuff like that. But it's a lot of polity.

Vanessa: How about training on their specific area of responsibility?

Interviewee: They don't get a lot of that.

Vanessa: Ok. These are no surprises to me, by the way. Have you run into any situations in the last several years? I mean, you're a very affable person, I can tell that just from just from your, your persona. So, have you run into any situations where there's been pretty significant conflict that you've had to work through?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: Can you share that with me?

Interviewee: Yeah, let me, let me think of a, a good example here. Well, I mean, I guess so, I don't know. One of the, one of the challenges in our larger staff dynamic is we had, we, we, there's sort of, there's some power struggles within the staff of, of who's responsible for what and who gets to make decisions about certain things. And so, you know, we have a, we have a staff meeting once a week separate from the other meeting I was telling you about that is similarly often kind of chaotic and hard to tell who's responsible for what. And, and that's a place where very often myself and my other colleague who's the other resident minister are kind of told like, "We really value your voice," but we've also kind of gotten pushed to the side and some of that. And in a way that, that I have mostly been like, "That's ok, we're, we're a small role," but we've had more con with, with my colleague not being particularly happy with some of how she's fitting into that system. And so, I've kind of been part of some of these kind of mediation things between our supervisor and her and the structure of, of how we how our voice is heard in that space. I don't know if this is actually the best example of a, of navigating some of this conflict. It, this is, this is one of the, the more complicated of some of the things. I could think of another example though that, that may be more helpful. Or I can keep going with this if that would, I don't know.

Vanessa: Whatever you're comfortable sharing.

Interviewee: Yeah. Well, I will say, I think, I think what I was starting to go down the path of is a somewhat unresolved thing to where it's maybe too hard to get offer a great analysis of it. So, a, a better example that I can better walk you through all the way up is we had some conflict coming up in session this past fall when people were disheartened, that we had added the colors of the rainbow flag to our logo. And so, there were people in the congregation who were saying, "We really don't like that. That's, you know, we're not a gay church, we support LGBTQ people, but we can't have that be our primary dynamic." And then we had people saying, "No, this is great, we should do this." And I'm one of the queer people on staff. So, I got kind of pulled into some of the conversations more directly with the church members who were upset about the thing to kind of say, "Here's some of the more reasons why we're doing some of this and why, why we, you know, want to go in one direction or not." And that was a place of kind of navigating the tension of people saying, "Oh, but I've been here forever and I'm an elder and I have a, a big role in the church. And so I, I know how it should go. And, and I don't like that you are doing this." Logistically it became a, you know, some back and forth of somebody writing a letter to the staff and then we were kicking it back to session to say, "Session should be having a response to some of this," and then session kicked it to the Diversity and Inclusion committee that I'm the person for and it, that was something that kind of just bounced around for a while until we ended up having more, some more direct conversations, with each of the people who was feeling upset about that.

Vanessa: Do you feel like that you reached resolution or...?

Interviewee: I think we reached some resolution. I think it's, you know, it was the sort of thing that it got to a place where no one was going to be entirely happy with where it ended. But I think we were able to get to a place of, of everyone involved, feeling like their voice was heard and like they wouldn't, I think there was fear coming up in the organization of people thinking, "Ah, am I gonna get sidelined and my voice won't be listened to when I disagree with something because I'm more conservative. Or, because I, you know, is this church moving in a direction where my voice will have less significance?" And I think we reached resolution of affirming those folks of, "No, your voice matters but we are moving in this direction." And, and I, I think that is, I mean, that has, that was about eight months ago or so that, that was all coming to a head. And I think by now we have a pretty, oh, I feel like I have good relationships with the people who are upset and, and we've been able to kind of move that in a healthier spot now.

Vanessa: It sounds like it. Did anyone, has anyone left the church over this?

Interviewee: Yes, I don't, I think, but I think it's, I don't know, I don't know if I don't think anyone has left the church over this particular iteration of it. People left the church previously when we were moving towards, towards more of the policy-wide, "We are supportive of the LGBTQ community." I don't think anyone left the church over, "We've changed the, the logo image," or at least no one visibly left the church for that reason. You know, no one said, "I'm leaving and here's why."

Vanessa: We experienced something very similar. As a woman on staff, do you feel that your voice is held in equal accord as your male counterparts?

Interviewee: Sometimes and sometimes not.

Vanessa: And the "sometimes not" - do you think it's just habit? Patriarchy? What do you think that causes that?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a, it's complicated for me to think about sometimes because I, you know, in the, just in the organizational structure, I'm at a lower position than, than most of our male colleagues, than all of my male colleagues. And so, so there are times when I, you know, feel like is this because I'm a woman or is this because, you know, well, I'm, I'm, I have less authority objectively. There's also some interesting dynamics so that, you know, one of our associate pastors who is kind of, you know, a step above me is a woman as well. And sometimes that dynamic still, I think I still observe things where it feels like she's sometimes a little bit at a different spot than, than male colleagues. But I also think I observed that, that she's spent a long time kind of asserting herself and being like, "No, no, no, I belong, I belong," to where sometimes that doesn't happen. I think some of it is just, you know, unavoidable patriarchy and the ways that society sees us and stuff. I think some of it also is, you know, learning how to hold yourself in some, you know, I, I think I have, as a young woman, thought a lot about how to hold authority and spaces legitimately without being like, "No, I must have power," in a way that becomes unhealthy. But while still trying to identify when something is, "Oh, I don't think I was being crazy for thinking I was sidelined in that spot, I think I actually was maybe being sidelined because of, because I'm a woman."

Vanessa: Yeah. And when you were in seminary, I noticed you went to [Seminary Name], which I would say would be more in the moderate to liberal camp, which is fine, by the way. Did you, you did not receive any specific leadership training though? Is that correct? Was it pretty much the usual, you know, biblical, exegisis, pastoral care, preaching?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: I mean, obviously you had to take, of course, sacraments, those kinds of things.

Interviewee: Yeah, we, so we, I mean, I had a field education class where we would reflect on the work we are doing in field ed. And that sometimes kind of touched on some themes of leadership and things like that but not, not super explicit. You know, I'd say even that was kind of more focused on, "How are you preaching? How are you organizing a small group," stuff like that.

Vanessa: Got it. Do you remember, and I know it's hard, this is kind of a hard question because even I looking back, don't know that I can remember the answer to this question, but were their leadership classes offered as electives?

Interviewee: I don't think so. I think there may have at one point been something that was like a weekend kind of, you know, like a "Saturday, Sunday come sign up for this thing." That was something related to organizational leader, leadership. But I don't entirely remember, you know, it, there, there weren't, there were not leadership classes offered as electives like as a semester long kind of something. If there was something, it was more of a one off, you know, short course kind of thing.

Vanessa: In the questionnaire, you answered that you were interested in seminars on managing staff and volunteer accountability, conflict, and the basics of church finance. In those three areas, is there anything specific in those three areas that you would hope to see emphasized?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, I think one of the things I've struggled with in, in my current call and, you know, that I've alluded to from things I've said so far is just being, having a large enough staff that it's sometimes hard to figure out how things should get. Do you know what, what the most effective line between collaboration and like hierarchy or, or just getting things done is, and I think church, you know, even in a smaller, even in a smaller staff setting where you're working just with your session or, you know, it's only one pastor maybe, I think we still are so often walking that tension of how to do collaboration well and to do the like "we're empowering everyone's voice" but also have to get some stuff done. And, and that's something that still feels like a puzzle to me of how to fully empower, empower people into leadership in whatever capacity that is, whether it's somebody chairing a committee or somebody, you know, signing up to volunteer with something or another staff person. But how to do that, do collaboration well, in a way that's still effective and where you can efficiently make decisions and things like that.

Vanessa: OK. Good. How about in the church finances or conflict resolution?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think, I mean, one of the, I think one of the most formative things for me in my, you know, time in seminary was when I was in CPE and doing having conversations about conflict resolution kind of things. And that was, you know, too little of a time. It was one summer of, of some intentional, “How do we come to a table with differing opinions and deal with that?" I think similar to the collaboration problem, what makes it tricky is doing the "everybody wants to be nice to each other thing at church" while also like dealing with conflict head on and not letting it fester because sometimes it's easier to let it fester than, than deal with uncomfortable feelings. So, I think things around how to do conflict management in a way that still allows people to feel empowered and supported and not like they're getting their voice disregarded, would be helpful. And then around financial things, I mean, I think just like I came out of, I came out of seminary feeling like I didn't know anything about church finances and that has been something where that was one of the reasons why I wanted to do this residency program that I'm in now because it was a chance to be kind of in a church but not the person primarily running everything for a little while. And in that I have, I think I've uniquely been able to kind of get a better sense of church finances from being here and working with our finance committee and our finance manager, to kind of figure out a

little bit of what of what they do. But even that is a, I've learned things about how that functions in a very large church and I expect probably most of my career, I will not be in a very large church and I might be, as the pastor, the main person who has to answer questions about some of that rather than we're in a big enough church that there's lots of people who are accountants and who, you know, do things professionally and know what they're doing and you can say, "This doesn't make sense to me." So, I, I think just more spaces for, for clergy to learn some of the details of managing finances for an organization would be really helpful.

Vanessa: Ok, great. Prior to your residency, was there any one area that you wished that you had spent more time learning about?

Interviewee: Hm. That's a good question. I don't know. I mean, maybe it's just now it's on my mind, but I think some of organizational management kind of things and the, the mystery of how you structure committees well, so that people don't just feel like their time is being wasted, but so you actually can get stuff done. And I think a lot of that is, is just puzzling and is the sort of thing that I know there are people who do that professionally and have that be their, their primary area. But I think in seminary, we can kind of focus on what it means to be a worship leader and a pastoral counselor and those kind of things while, we maybe avoid some of the, you know, "running an organization and managing people aspect of it."

Vanessa: You'd be, you might be surprised to learn that solo pastors spend over 50% of their time in management so often find burning out because they haven't been given that particular skill set. My last question, I'm just gonna switch gears just a little bit on you. Thinking back over your biblical learning, is there a biblical example of leadership that you draw on when you feel like you don't know how to handle a given, given situation, whether it be conflict or it just be organizing a meeting, whatever it is. Is there a biblical example you, you lean on?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think, I mean, I, I really love the story of Esther and I think, I think Esther is a, is it an empowering story from being a woman in ministry? But for the ways that she was like, found herself thinking, "I don't have this, you know, I'm just, I'm just this woman. I don't have the skills or the knowledge or, you know, I'm kind of stepping into this huge system, and what can my role be?" But I think the, the bravery that she took in, in her story and, the ways that, you know, consulting with somebody who, who kind of, you know, could advise her a little bit. But also, just being brave and, and doing what she could do and, you know, being realizing you're in somewhere for a time such as this and, kind of thinking, I'll do what I can even if I can't do everything perfect.

Vanessa: Yes. Excellent, perfect. Is there anything else you would want to share with me before I bring this to a close?

Interviewee: I don't know, I, I don't think anything comes to mind. But I'm, I'm, I'm really glad you're thinking about these things and it sounds like the work you're doing is,

is really cool and I'm, I'm eager to see where it ends up and what kind of things you, you may come up with to help all of us.

Vanessa: So, the workshops, there'll probably be four of them at individual times, probably in the summertime because I have been talking to pastors and my own schedule. That seems to be the time when most people are available. They will by zoom so that people from all over the country, because I've talked to people located all over the country, can participate. So, because you're on my list when I get to the point where I start scheduling those, you'll receive an email and there'll be no charge because it's part of my project, right? You'll be able to attend and, part of the attendance will be at the end of it you will be emailed like a, a handbook or a, a packet of information as a reference guide.

Interviewee: Wonderful. That's great.

Vanessa: Ok. So that's all I have for you today. I thank you so much. I tried to keep it to my 20 to 30 minutes to be respectful of your time. And I would like to close in prayer, but I would ask that you close us in prayer.

Interviewee: Yeah, let's do it. Dear God, I thank you for this time we've been able to spend to, to talk and to think about some of these things. I just pray that you'll be with both of us in our ministry and in our work and in the ways that we meet your people and manage the, the challenges of ministry and the challenges of, of loving our communities, even when things are complicated and dynamics are difficult. I just pray that you'll be with both of us in our work and in all the ways that, that this work will continue to impact people in many different ways. Amen.

Vanessa: Amen. Thank you so very much.

Interviewee: Thank you, Vanessa.

Vanessa: OK, let me just let me change my name too. I'm using my church Zoom. Ok, great. Let's open with a word of prayer. Oh, gracious and almighty God, I just give you thanks for this day and I give you thanks for [Interviewee] and the work that he went through in order to be a minister of Word and Sacrament, Lord. And I, I give you thanks and praise that he is ministering to this congregation and I'm sure that they love him as much as we loved him when he was part of [Presbytery] and under our care. So just bless our time today. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Interviewee: Amen

Vanessa: So tell me [Interviewee], how, how is it going?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's going, going awesome. I think like six months. No. Was it six months longer than that? Probably like September. I don't know.

Vanessa: And how big, how big is church?

Interviewee: Like 120 members, I think? I'm not too, maybe 130 members. I'm not 100% certain

Vanessa: And in worship, typically?

Interviewee: Worship right at about 90 right now. I think between 90 and 100.

Vanessa: That's a good ratio.

Interviewee: Yeah. No, it is. That's one thing that I do love about the church is everyone is very active and like our attendance trends are up around like 30% from where they were when I came. So that's really positive. But we're growing from like that, that warm group, you know, the people who are connected to the church are just coming back and they're worshiping more and frequency, you know, worship is increasing for people. We have lots of involvement on campus. I think we normally average around 60 people serving on campus during the week, which is just absolutely incredible. We have a tutoring program with the elementary school that's in close proximity to the church. So every Tuesday, a group of I think like 15 former school teachers and just different people who love bilingual speaking people from the church or bilingual individuals from the church walk over and they have a group of students they bring from the elementary school to the church for tutoring and the elementary school, their social worker or community liaison I think they call it, works with the families and lets them know that extra tutoring is available from the church and then places them in our tutoring program. So, we have about 30 students in our tutoring program which is really cool. We have like a food pantry, a soup kitchen, lots of different community resources and then we use those kind of as pathways in the ministry at the church. So, there's like a Bible study that is just people from the food pantry and then, you know, the people from Bible studies

start coming to worship. Same with after school, with the tutoring program. We get those families connected into Sunday school and in the children's ministry. And so, it has been really neat though, just to see the different the different ministries the church was doing to see those kind of all come back into worship. Like when I came, everything was very siloed and, you know, we had a lot of staff, we were very staff heavy, but all of our staff kind of was like individually operating and you know, like they thought their job was to serve soup or they thought their job was to hand out food or, you know, to tutor kids and no one understood like, "Hey, without Sunday morning worship, like you're not gonna have a job, right?" And so, you really brought it back under the you know, is under worship, right? This is an expression of who we are. This is an expression of what we're sent out to do on Sunday morning. And so, my big push since I've come is, you know, what does it look like to worship with joy, to be excited about being at worship together? To not leave church talking about all the problems, but to leave church looking forward to what God's calling us to do and where God's leading us that week. And so that's been a really cool journey just for me to see the church grow through that time and to see the church respond well to just making, I guess, since I've been there, I think, like I said, worship has been the main thrust. And so just focusing on worship, focusing on consistency and worship and you know, how we worship, just making worship something that's more familiar, I think when I came, worship was very disorganized. You know, everything was disorganized. So, just adding, you know, taking away that chaos, taking away the anxiety of not knowing when church is gonna get out or how long the sermon is gonna be or what worship is gonna look like that Sunday. We brought back, you know, just a very reformed style of worship and I started printing bulletins again and just bringing back things that are simple enough, but have been taken away because of one thing or another. So, but it's been really cool to see the church, you know, the church grow and the church be excited about being in a church and just having a positive spirit. You know, it's been a great thing to be a part of and I, you know, I haven't, I haven't done much right. Like it's, just trusting, you know, trusting in the Holy Spirit to lead us and really trying to listen. You know, they have had coffee with 80 people but, lots of coffee, lots of lunch dates, lots of people to my office and just trying to figure out who the church is and who the people of the church are and where God's leading them. That's been, you know, where I spent all of my time the last eight months, however long it's been now seven months.

Vanessa: As far as paid staff, how many are actually paid staff?

Interviewee: I think we have eight. So, we have five staff who come to staff meeting. We have our Worship Director. We have two mission coordinators. They're both like, make a full-time position. So, it's like a 30-hour week and a 10-hour week position. And then we have Director of Operations who is essentially, I don't know, like an executive, what an Executive Pastor role might look like, but they do. She does all of the office and administrative finance and then campus stuff as well. So that role is pretty large and then, that's a full-time position. And then we have a Bell Choir Director. We have, I think we have four, so we have four paid staff who are just for our worship, but which is a little, you know, a little bit worship heavy on staff and a little bit missions heavy on staff right

now. But for me, and then we have a janitor and then so yeah, I think we have like probably nine or 10 actually. But yeah, we have quite a bit of paid staff.

Vanessa: Would you say most of those are part-time though? With maybe the exception of the finance and administrative gal?

Interviewee: Yeah. So yeah, so I'd say our, our 30 hour, the 30 hour admissions role is considered a full time role. I think our hourly pay is over 30. So, we have two besides me, we have two full-time staff members and then everyone else is about 10 hours a week.

Vanessa: Ok. That makes sense.

Interviewee: So, yeah.

Vanessa: So how big is your elder board?

Interviewee: 12

Vanessa: 12. Ok.

Interviewee: Yep.

Vanessa: How about your deacons?

Interviewee: 12

Vanessa: You have a lot for a congregation your size. That's, but that's good.

Interviewee: And I know the current, like the current trend is to make those numbers smaller. So, your quorum is, I guess, easier to meet or you don't have as many people or you're not pulling or taxing on the congregation as much. But that's, we haven't had a problem with the, with our numbers there.

Vanessa: That's good. Can you just give me a quick overview? I mean, you said you've been concentrating a lot on worship but what would a typical week look like for you?

Interviewee: Yeah, so Monday, I do, Monday is a planning day with, for instance, now coming out of COVID, a pastor I think does a lot of social media, a lot of video, a lot of live stream tech, different stuff like that, you know. So, on Monday, I go through and I, I work on all of our live stream stuff. I work on our social media just making sure that our Sunday worship went well online, that the videos are all trimmed and ready to go, podcast is functioning. I respond to any immediate needs or concerns from worship. You know, things we heard about in worship, things that happen in worship, any issues or, you know, pros or cons or just an email, I need to shoot out to someone. I do all of that on Monday. And then on Tuesday we have our staff meeting so we meet as a staff for an

hour on Tuesdays. And I also hold meetings on Tuesdays. So, I normally Tuesday morning, I have a staff meeting and then Tuesday afternoon at one I'll have yeah, whatever meetings I need to sit on, I sit on Finance and Personnel. So, we hold those meetings once a month on Tuesdays and then we also have session on Tuesday. So, Tuesday normally is a pretty meeting-heavy day. Then Wednesday, I also will have meetings. So, I normally, my personal meetings, like with people from the congregation, people looking for time, you know, schedule time with me. I schedule that, you know, lunch meetings, different stuff on Wednesdays. And then, I also will have whatever Presbytery obligations I, I'm working on, I try to take care of it on Wednesday as well. On Thursday I, I write. So, it's kind of the day I set aside for, for research, reading, writing, studying, working sermon prep and then I normally will, you know, outline my whole sermon and do my research on Thursday. And then Friday, I, I write my manuscript on Friday morning and then I'll normally put that aside. And then, Saturday, I do more worship prep. I'll do like my actual, you know, Sunday, like any, anything I have to do for Sunday worship, I'll take care of on Saturday if I have to go to the church and print stuff or if I have to work on, you know, different media stuff, whatever that is, I try to try to get that taken care of on Saturday, even Saturday evening. Sometimes my, my schedule right now is pretty chaotic. I haven't, you know, I haven't really nailed down a, a good workflow yet. Like I'm still trying to figure out, what it's like to preach every Sunday and, and just get stuff taken care of that church in a timely manner. It's more like a, a drawn out, like, all week process right now for worship, which is, you know, probably not the, not the most sustainable or not the healthiest, method.

Vanessa: Yeah, I'm not hearing in there any day off.

Interviewee: Yeah. Friday, so Friday, I, I normally just work, like a half day on Friday and then, Saturday morning, I'll take with the kids, but right now, instead of taking like a full day off, I'm probably working, you know, taking care of something every day of the week, which is, I need to have a day where I just put my phone aside and I'm not reachable, but right now, that's not the case. And then Sunday worship and I just, you know, work until noon on Sunday. Then normally Sunday is our day for barbecuing and pool and laying around. So, and I find, I find Sunday rather restful. Actually, I'm not been stressing too hard on worship. I've just been trusting, you know, trusting everyone to lead well and to, you know, serve well and then just putting my kind of focus on preaching and that's been, you know, that's been a helpful workflow. I always told myself like I wasn't gonna micromanage people. I wasn't gonna get involved in, you know, trying to do everything because very much so, like, my, my personality and just like, I think my, my general makeup can lead me to doing lots of random stuff, you know, I'll be in the parking lot messing with something in the bathroom, messing with something at the computer trying to get the live stream ready at the soundboard, touching something and then having to run up to preach and it's like, that's not, that's not a great thing on Sunday morning so I try to...

Vanessa: Just so you feel better - pretty common.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. But I, I, I refuse to do it. You know, I really do. I, I get to church. I go to my office, I'll normally just sit back and read the passage for the day, listen to music, do some deep breathing and then I'll walk into the sanctuary. I walk through my sermon before anyone gets there. And, again, just kind of try to have a pretty calm meditative focus and when people show up, when worship rehearsal starts happening, when the A/V team gets there, I just, I'm hands off and I, I say, "Hey, if there's a problem, we'll talk about it on Monday. Like whatever happens today should have been planned a week ago or two weeks ago. If a problem arises or pops up, like we'll just handle it in the coming week and fix it for next week."

Vanessa: You had mentioned that you have a weekly staff meeting. Do you have a formal agenda? Is it more casual? How do you handle that?

Interviewee: Yeah, we have, we have a formal agenda. Every staff meeting, we start with a devotional. Normally someone reads from Jesus' calling and we just open up with a short devotional. We share about our weeks, just personal, you know. From early on someone told me, "Hey, your staff like, wants to hear that you went to Disneyland with your kids. They just don't want to be like grilled or yelled at or something," which is, which was important advice. And so, so yeah, we'll just talk about life and then we debrief worship. We, you know, talk about what went good, what we could work on growing edges, then we work on worship planning for the coming week. We already have, like, everyone's responsible for submitting their worship information the week before. So, we come into staff meeting with worship already planned and then we discuss that around the table. So, if there's anything that might have been missed or needs to be adjusted, we fix it there and then that way our volunteers who come in can print bulletins and get everything ready. And then we do staff reports. So, I'm kind of you know, we haven't, our staff had never had staff meetings previously. And so, me coming in and saying we have to have a staff meeting was a big deal. People looked at it like a problem and, they weren't using that time appropriately. So, I, I would hear about a problem midweek from a volunteer, like, "Hey, the ovens broke in, in the kitchen or our refrigerators and our, for our food distribution ministry are broken," or you just random stuff and it's like all stuff. We have staff members paid full time salaries to cover that, right? So why aren't we talking about that staff meeting? Why aren't we talking about, you know, needs around campus or different stuff we've heard around campus at staff. So, we really worked on you know, how information flows, you know, as a staff person, how we take in information, how we use that information, where we need to get that information to, you know, how we work with committees, how we work with session. We've been working on that a lot. Pretty much every staff meeting. We do a little bit of you know, talking about how we handle information or how we how we move information through kind of our, you know, church workflow or system.

Vanessa: Ok, good. When I reviewed your answers on the questionnaire, you had indicated that you were, that you felt comfortable that during your internship, which I think was with [Person]. Is that right?

Interviewee: Mhm.

Vanessa: Yeah. That you had got sufficient training in managing your staff, conflict management, and just general church finance. That is a very unusual situation. I have not heard that in all the interviews I've done. So, can you tell me what was different in your internship that gave you that type of confidence or training?

Interviewee: Yeah. So I think [Pastor Name], [Pastor Name] definitely went above and beyond. Like, I in my internship, I worked directly with [Pastor Name] and so I met with him for an hour, an hour each week. And then he also would include me in his meetings. So, a staff meeting, I would sit in on staff meeting and you know, just sit next to him, listen to the meeting and then after staff, he would debrief me on, you know, the different conversations, how he handles the different dynamics, let me attend session meetings. So, I would go and sit next to him during session meetings. And again, you know, we debrief over a coffee or something. Finance. He brought me into their Finance meetings and allowed me to you know, take part in those. And I remember I never, you know, the admin work in the senior pastor role, always terrified me. And I thought like, "Hey, I'm good being an associate. Like I just want to love people. I love, you know, setting up breaking down first one there, first one at church, last one to leave church. I love pastoral care, I love just being with the people," and I thought like the associate role was gonna be my thing for sure. You know, I could really see myself just taking an associate role and being there for 40 years and that being my call. And then being there at [Church Name] and just seeing how he led really brought stuff into a human perspective. For me, it was like, "Wait, you can walk into a Finance meeting and crack a joke be yourself." You know, you can ask questions of your own budget. You can, you know, empower people to, you know, breathe their own truth into the budget. Like there's a lot of those meetings don't have to be so one sided. It's not like the pastor coming in and saying, “This is the only way and you all have to listen to me.” The pastor can come in and say, "Hey, like, what are we going to do?" or "There is this deficit like, you know, how do we get that to the church? Like, how are we transparent with our budget?" I think so often, unfortunately, pastors carry that or like the finance committees carry that as their own burden. And so, they choose to like hide it from the congregation or they don't try to be, you know, kind of fluid with financial conversations. But [Pastor Name] just very much was so open about the finances and was you know, really just more of a player or like a participant in the finance meetings. And I thought that was, you know, in my mind, at least that was a different role than I had seen before. And I was really impressed. I was like, "Hey, I think I can," you know, that was the first time I was like, "I think I can do this," like, you know, I think this, my kind of perception wasn't necessarily how it actually was. And so, so it was good to be able to see how [Pastor Name] led because I had only worked with pastors who were very much dictators. And not say, you know, like, you know, everyone has different leadership styles. But, it was great to see, you know, at a large church that was, doing very well what leadership looked like.

Vanessa: And I also noticed, you meant, you said something about you have an ongoing mentor?

Interviewee: Yeah, I have an, I have an executive coach, so the church...

Vanessa: Are they in your Presbytery, or outside, or...?

Interviewee: No, it's, so they're like a business, like, executive coach for CEOs. And, so they're from a business background. But my coach does have a church experience. He's from a Presbyterian background. Now he goes to [Church Name], he works with the finances at [Church Name]. But then he also, he was successful in the financial sector and now in his like third career, he's coaching as like a, a way to give back, I guess.

Vanessa: How did you hook up with him? I'm just curious. It's very unusual again for a first-time solo pastor to have a, a relationship which is very good by the way, but...

Interviewee: Yeah, so it's some, so we're like, again, I think it was, the pastor I worked with at [Church Name]. Reverend [Name] was the one who he had a, he had an executive coach and he, had served on COM. He's on COM at [Church Name] and he had served on COM as Presbytery and, [Presbytery Name], which, you know, I think was like one of the largest Presbyteries in the country. And so, he, he had a pretty good understanding of like call packages and of first time, you know, just what first time calls look like from serving on COM. And so, he told me he was like, "Hey, when you're negotiating your call package, negotiate an executive coach because you, like, you're gonna, you're gonna need one. Like, it's gonna be really helpful to have someone walk you through, like conflict resolution, walk you through finance, you know, financial conversations, these different things." And so, I had, being in [Church Name] like the [City], I think we just have lots of good connections there. It's a pretty affluent community and lots of business minded people. And so, I got connected with, with my coach through the, just, network of [Church Name] people. But, but yeah, he's, he's awesome. And absolutely, you know, a game changer for sure. Being able, we talk once a week and have a Zoom call and just whatever, you know, walk through staff conversations, walk through financial conversations, walk through session meetings, walk through, you know, conflict resolution or problems that might be popping up. Helps me, you understand, like, "Hey, there has to be something like out in front of you, right? Like you can't just, pat yourself on the back and stay where you're at, you have to be able to be looking to what's next." And, so he's really, you know, really good and, and it is, you know, now in [Church Name], for instance, I serve on the Discerning Church Vitality committee. It's a new committee we just formed and we're sourcing like any pastor who wants it, we're giving coaching for free. So, we're paying, through our DCV committee, we're paying for those pastors to get coaching. And so, we're setting them up with, with executive coaches now. And, it's also something we're, you know, trying to get, our first time, you know, our new calls or first calls to get set up with as well. But the Presbytery is just paying for it. And so that's really, you know, that's really cool. Right now, my church covers the covers the coaching package as part of my call.

Vanessa: That's great. You indicated that you were interested in seminars on interviewing, hiring and job descriptions, and staff volunteer accountability. Was there anything specific in those areas that you were looking or hoping it would be emphasized?

Interviewee: You know, I don't, I think for myself, it's just being aware of, what current trends are in hiring. What, you know, what does good staffing look like? What is, you know, what does it look like to run a staff well. And I mean, I have a stack of Simon Sinek books and I've watched the, you know, the TED Talks and I've tried to stay up with, you know, all of the information, you know, my coach obviously, helps me with conversations as well. But I think, you know, for myself, I just want to be able to be like, good to lead well, to serve the staff well, to not, you know. I, I think sometimes, unfortunately in church leadership, we have like destructive tendencies or we, you know, we can do more harm than good sometimes on our church staffs. And I, for myself, I wanna, yeah, I want to avoid those pitfalls. I want to be able to, you know, it really helped the church grow through the, the people we employ. I think that's part of our, you know, part of good stewardship is, is staffing. Well, so.

Vanessa: Ok, great. Is there anything that you wish you had learned prior to taking that first call? Do you feel that there is anything in either in seminary or just in your experience that left you slightly unprepared?

Interviewee: You know, I think I was aware enough to understand that nothing was going to prepare me for my first call. And I know, like, I, I didn't go into it, like seminary was gonna somehow, like, my deacons have served communion more than I served communion. You know, I, I couldn't touch the elements. Even in my internship is like, hey, like, stay away from this stuff. You don't want to get like, written up, you don't wanna, you know, get called before a counsel or something. And so, like, I still have never done a baptism. And so, on Sunday mornings, you only do communion once a month. So, I've served communion now seven times and I had a problem two months ago and a deacon came up to me and said, "Hey, like this was an issue," and I was like, "I didn't even understand that was an issue because I don't know, like, you know, like you're the expert, right? Like, you know, more you serve communion here at [Church Name] like hundreds of times and I've done it communion six times total in my life." You know, I've administered communion. So those kinds of things are just interesting. Right? Like, there are a lot of, a lot of areas where you're very, you know, you're just not ready or not prepared and, you don't quote [Name] on this but I remember when I was discerning calls, like he, he said, like, "Hey, if you take, you know, if you take a solo charge, you're going to learn more in a matter of weeks than you learn anywhere else. Like there is nothing that would prepare you for what you'll learn and, you know, the information or just the growth you'll have as a pastor, you know, by taking a solo charge and just, you know, just going for it." And, and I thought that was, you know, kind of the baptism by fire approach, but at the end of the day, incredible amount of truth there, right? Like, when you're the pastor who is 50 and you're going into your first pastorate, and you've been associate your whole life, that pastor of 50 is still gonna learn a lot about themselves and a lot about ministry and their first solo charge at 50. You know, and so I guess I just skip the associate thing and went straight for the, you know, went straight for the Head of Staff. But, but it has been a giant learning experience and I never, you know, I never expected or put that on anyone to prepare me for that. You know, I, I think just trusting in God. I remember, like I've always felt, I've always felt like I wasn't enough or like what, you know, what I brought wasn't like top shelf, right? And like growing up I had I had to

go to speech therapy and to pull out speech therapy in school and that was really hard. It was like, man, like, you know, oh you can't speak. Like here you have to go to pull out speech therapy and have people tell you why you can't speak right? And, or like what, you know what you're doing wrong every day, you know, you have that critique all the time and and I had glasses and I was like, oh kids, like you're automatically like, oh you can't talk and you have glasses and you're in elementary school. Like that's tough. But I felt like that kind of shaped my, like general perception of myself that like, I just wasn't going to like, what I offered was never going to be good enough. And I remember in the call process, it was like every step of the way and the call process was just God saying like, "Hey, like you're enough. Like you have exactly what you need to have to do this. Like I've, I've given you more than enough," and I remember the, what was it, the seminary like our commencement or this speaker the commencement got up and said, "Hey, just bring yourselves to worship. Like that's what God's asking like and just bring, you know, bring yourself, bring the gifts you have, like, you don't have to have the most beautiful voice, just bring your voice." And I was like, yeah, that's, that's so true, right? Like God wants us to use our gifts. God wants us to be ourselves and to be authentic in our worship. And so often, I think we look at senior pastor and we're like, senior pastor has to be better than themselves. Senior pastor has to, you know, when they preach, they have to bring a certain persona or voice when they, you know, are around others, they have to act a certain way when they, they just have to be better than themselves. We have better expectations when they fall, we write stories on CNN or the New York Times just because we expect them to be better. And I just remember that whole call process constantly being reminded that, you know, who I am. You know, who God has made me is exactly who God's calling to the pulpit. And so that was, you know, just really affirming or reaffirming that this is where God wants me and so I've never, you know, I remember one time a friend or so, you know, someone like, from a social circle that and was like, "Hey, like, are you one of those pastors who just tries to be themselves?" And they said as kind of like, I think possibly like, a sideways dig or something. But I was, I was just like, "Yeah, I guess so." Like, I don't know what that, you know, that was an interesting comment. But if that's how you view the church, sure. Like I'm just one of those pastors who tries to be myself because I think, you know, that's what God's calling us to do. So yeah, it is a, yeah, did I expect to be perfectly prepared for this moment? Like no way would I put that on [Person] or a professor or the Presbytery? No, I wouldn't. And anyone who, you know, at least came to me for my advice, I, you know, give them the same advice that I was given like, "Hey, you're, you know, we can try to prepare, you can try to help you, we can try to, you know, give you all the advice we can. But until you jump in there, there's a lot you're not gonna be prepared for."

Vanessa: So, I have one, only one final question and it's kind of, I'm taking a left turn here with this question. So, I want you to think kind of more theologically. Not that you haven't been, but is there a specific biblical leadership example that you return to when you're dealing with anything that you're dealing with, whether it be a good thing or a bad thing?

Interviewee: You know. I think for myself, like what I'm trying to was the, that's when I get the book real quick because it's, I don't know, I can't remember this song but I'm

gonna, let's see, the book that [Name] and I read together was, has always, you know, especially my calling and just, has always helped me, but I wanna get the, I don't know why I can't think of this. I'm horrible at authors names, but I'm gonna, I'm gonna get it for you because it's awesome. Someday I'm gonna remember every book I, every book I've read but...

Vanessa: Tell me how that works.

Interviewee: Yeah. Well, it's, it's funny. Yeah. Yeah.

Vanessa: So, now I'm really curious. So, you're gonna have to tell me the name of the book or you're gonna have to email me the name of the book, one of the two.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. So, it's, it's "Under the Unpredictable Plant" by Eugene Peterson.

Vanessa: I mean, anything by Eugene Peterson is gonna be awesome. Right?

Interviewee: Yeah. But it's about, it's about Jonah, all right. And...

Vanessa: Under the, what was the, Under the Unpredictable Plan?

Interviewee: Plant. "Under the Unpredictable Plant."

Vanessa: Plant? Ok.

Interviewee: And, and so it's about, it's about Jonah's, you know, call. And so, I, I think it's just this idea that for us, we always want to be called to like the best place, right? We always want God to call us to the biggest church or the, the best community or what's best, maybe for the best school district for our kids or, you know, all of that. But, but sometimes God has a different plan and sometimes, you know, God's calling us to a specific time and place and, and so I think that was, you know, that was really helpful for me. Because there were, when, you know, when you're looking at calls, for instance, there are a lot of options. You know, I think we had one call that was to a beach community in [State] that was literally like a block away from [City], which is probably, you know, like the coolest purest whitest sand beach in the entire universe. And it just looked amazing. I was like, "Wow, that would be crazy, right?" Like, could you imagine living in the perfect vacation world all the time? And you know, why would you not take that call? Right? Like why would you not go there? Why would you go to [City] where I walk over homeless people to get to the, you know, place I go eat out for lunch. Like what's the but I just, I, I think that was really helpful for me is, you know, just remembering that Jonah, I mean, right, like, totally went through, went through a lot to end up, to end up, you know, where he went, right? Or to end up following God's, following God's will, not his own, not his own will. The vacation resort sounds amazing but, the God's plan is, you know, different, right? And, and that being said, I mean, hey, like this does an amazing call, right? Like I don't think anyone complains about living in

[City] either. It's pretty, pretty sweet. And so, but it just says, yeah, it's coming from, you know, coming from [City], my call now looks a lot different. Like the people, you know, the people we're ministering to are different than the people we're ministering to on [City] and for sure. So, but that is, yeah, the story of of Jonah. Definitely.

Vanessa: Ok. Well, that's my questions. I don't have anything else unless there's anything else that you just are dying to share with me.

Interviewee: No, I would say the executive coach is really cool. I think.

Vanessa: I made a note of that. That's good advice. And I will be sending out links for the different seminar series I'll be offering probably mid-to-late summer because most pastors, that's about the only time they're not busy doing lots of other things. So, you'll get a link and there'll be a registration, no charge. And, there'll be a workbook that you'll get after completion and most of the seminars will just be a couple hours long because I found that even for myself much more than two hours and people just, they fatigue, particularly on a Zoom, situation. It's just to, how, I don't care how great the information is, it's just too long. So, I'm making mine shorter. And I'd rather people walk away with valuable information then drink from a fire hose and walk away so tired that they can't even remember the first thing I said. So.

Interviewee: So is that, is this the end of your DMin then? Is this like, um...?

Vanessa: Yeah, so the work product, the way the Doctor of Ministry works, at least the one program that I'm in and most of them, you have a, some type of a work product either it's for a church individually, that's pretty common. Mine's more broad because I'm creating workshops in Administrative Management for pastors, primarily geared to pastors like yourself, a first time either solo pastor or first time pastor who's moved from associate to a senior pastor position. Because in my research and in my conversations, I'm finding that most pastors aren't really prepared for the administrative side. They're prepared really well, theologically. You know, they're taught how to preach, how to counsel, pastoral visits. Those types of things, but they don't really, unless they get a good internship, which is also very rare. You were really lucky that [Pastor Name] trained you as well as he did. But most internships aren't even covering, you know, "How do I interview somebody?" or "How do I understand what a budget looks like?" or "What do I do when my staff are fighting with each other?" You know, those types of things. And so that my project work product is the workshops and the workbooks that go with that. But there's a lot more to doing a Doctor of Ministry. There's like a lot of research and I mean, it is hard. Let me just put it that it's hard. I'm like, what I, what was I thinking?

Interviewee: Where, where are you doing your DMin?

Vanessa: New York Theological

Interviewee: So does that. So, is that where [Name] is doing hers?

Vanessa: Yeah. And that, yeah, [Name], she took fourth year. Well, technically it's a third year but they call it fourth year. If I could like, roll back the clock and make a different decision, a lot of DMins have much more class work where you're, to me it's much more like my master's maybe was? You're doing much more class work and then you're doing like a master's thesis, but they're calling it a, a ministry thesis. And I really wanted something, I don't think I wanted something as hard as this, but I wanted something that would, challenge me more because, you know, I have three degrees. I have a business degree. I have a master's in business. I have a master's in theology. I wanted something that would really challenge me. Maybe it's a little bit big on the challenge side though.

Interviewee: That's awesome though. I think it's, in my mind, like, when I was going, you know, like my first, like, month, like, preparing to, you know, go into this call, I looked for books. I looked for websites. I, I looked for anything just talking about, like, hey, first time calls. Like, what does this look like? What's the landscape, what's like the, you know, organizationally, administratively, like, how does this work? Right. And I didn't find anything, like I didn't find any good books, I didn't find, you know, really too much that helped. And so it was, you know, a little bit daunting just knowing like you have to kind of supplement this yourself, right. You have to take bits and pieces from everywhere and, make it work. But I do think the idea of being able to offer something to first time calls is really important. And if we're, you know, one of my biggest pet peeves in Presbytery is we spend money on ridiculous stuff like, and not, I mean, hey, I'm sure it's worth it to. I remember.

Vanessa: You're right. Absolutely.

Interviewee: And I served on a committee at [Church Name] and, you know, we sent like 100 kids to [City] and it's like we could have sent them to [City] and saved $100,000. Like, what, you know, what's [City]? It's a great experience and all that stuff. But, at the end of the day, like, hey, if we could spend just a small amount of this and sourcing our pastors we're bringing on with good information and making sure, the pastors we have are well cared for and, you know, just using a little bit of the money for just administrative needs, whatever that might be, you know, I think that there's a real, a real need for it in the church. You know, I think pastors could really be, could really benefit from learning these, you know, the things you're looking at, like the staffing and administrative side of things. So it is, it is important and hopefully our, you know, hopefully our Presbyteries will start start seeing that and trying to get our, you know, our candidates and those we're calling into ministry and those we're bringing into our Presbyteries, making sure they're adequately, you know, trained and prepared and at least they get the resources they're looking for.

Vanessa: Right. I know there's a shift in the kind of, the old thinking needs to shift. Because it used to be that, you know, the head pastor, even if it's a solo pastor, they didn't have to deal with, deal with those things, which in fact isn't really true. Because statistically, and I read a lot of statistical articles on what pastors actually spend their time doing and, what they really wish they learned, it's very different than what they might

say. Because there is this, like you had mentioned, there's this impression of what a pastor, senior pastor, solo pastor, Head of Staff should be versus the reality of what they really are doing. And that's the burnout rate, you know, is really high, shockingly high, because they're just, they go in and they're not prepared or they're, you know, it's like a grist mill that their congregation chews them up, spits them out because they're just not ready for it. So, anyway, thank you so much, [Interviewee].

Interviewee: Yes, thank you.

Vanessa: This has been a wonderful interview you've given me of all the interviews I've done, I've done like, I don't know 12. I've got some really great nuggets from you. So, I really, really appreciate that very, very much and I'm gonna ask if you would close us with a word of prayer.

Interviewee: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. Heavenly Father, we thank you for Vanessa. We thank you for her just unique call to ministry, God. We know you, you have a plan and a path for each one of us and so often we push and pull on what those things look like. So we just thank you for this vision that she has had her DMin. And the time she's put in, we know it's been a lot of work and a lot of effort and maybe even more effort than expected. But just let her know and be blessed by the fruit she sees that comes from this and not only that but let others just continue to reap the benefits of the work she's doing today, Lord, so that the future of a pastoral ministry and the future ministries of those who are yet to be called just gonna look drastically different. So expectations, needs, concerns all, all those different things, emotions, even that might be running around can all be addressed and met through just learning these vital administrative roles, learning how to lead well, Lord. Be with Vanessa in her continued work in this journey. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Vanessa: Amen. Thank you so much. I really, really appreciate your time.

Pastor Interview #4

Vanessa: This computer, great. I appreciate that. So, first of all, [Interviewee], can you tell me which platform you found my request to fill out the questionnaire?

Interviewee: That is a good question.

Vanessa: Oh, let's start with a good one.

Interviewee: It's been, it's been a little while. So, my memory is fuzzy and you're actually gonna need to remind me a little bit about my responses as well to that.

Vanessa: And that's fine. Yes, I will. There were two forms, one was an I-Lift Cohort platform and one was, I think just a general maybe Gen X, Gen Z or something, Millennial. I'm not sure it was a, it...

Interviewee: It would have been the, the latter. I'm a part of like several different like young Presbyterians or yeah, millennial Presbyterians or something like that group.

Vanessa: Great. I thought so. [Name] who is dear to me, posted it for me. So that's probably a great platform. Ok, great. Also, so I don't know the location of your church, the size of your church. Would you mind sharing that information?

Interviewee: Absolutely. So we are in [City], [State], which is the western part of the state in the mountains. And the church size is on the books. We have about 700 members.

Vanessa: Oh, good size. And in worship, what would you say?

Interviewee: Post-COVID we are around, 150 in person and then around, another probably 150 to 200 views on YouTube.

Vanessa: Wow. Really?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: Ok. Is this your first call?

Interviewee: It is my first ordained call. Yes.

Vanessa: Ok. Am I understanding correctly that you're the associate pastor.

Interviewee: I am, yeah.

Vanessa: Is the staff, can you tell me a little bit about the staff, the size of the staff? And...

Interviewee: Sure. We are, we're short staffed at the moment. We actually have two searches going on. When we are fully staffed, we have, a Pastor Head of Staff, two associates, Director of Family ministries, Director of Music ministries, two office administrators, a Building and Grounds manager, and, since COVID, a person who does media for us.

Vanessa: Ok. And you're short staffed in what areas?

Interviewee: We, I'm currently the associate pastor. We actually have an APNC that's meeting. And hopefully, we'll have somebody by summer. We're also, sorry, we're also, in between music ministers at the moment, Directors of Music ministry, so we have a search going on for that too.

Vanessa: That seems to be a thing. We just changed ours. There's like three just in our Presbytery who have changed theirs. I don't know, did something, can you share with me a little bit, [Interviewee], about what your, duties as associate consist of?

Interviewee: Sure. So I, I focused in on two areas. One is Congregational Care. So, I'm the Staff Liaison for the Deacon Board and coordinate kind of pastoral visitations and stuff with the rest of the staff. And then the other half is Adult Education and Formation. So, you know, building out the, the curriculum for both Sunday school and non-Sunday school hours and you know, recruiting teachers and that type of thing and then worship leadership every Sunday. I preach 12 times basically every month. And then other duties as assigned.

Vanessa: Ok. And do you have any direct staff that reports to you?

Interviewee: No, I do not.

Vanessa: And do you report primarily to the senior pastor?

Interviewee: I do. Yeah. Yeah. She's my direct manager.

Vanessa: And it is a she.

Interviewee: Yes. Mhm.

Vanessa: And when you were hired, were you given a job description or a thorough something that would say is fairly comprehensive of what your duties would consist of?

Interviewee: I was. Yes, we, we all have our job descriptions on Google Docs which makes them living documents. And then every year that we do our review, we also review the job description and make sure it's actually fitting what we're actually doing?

Vanessa: OK. And so that answer, already answered one of my questions. You do have an annual review.

Interviewee: That's right with the, with the senior pastor.

Vanessa: OK. And do you have scheduled meetings with your senior pastor? Monthly, weekly, quarterly? Anything like that?

Interviewee: We do a, we do a monthly one-on-one because I'm like the sole associate pastor. We actually have our meeting twice a month every other week.

Vanessa: And when you have those meetings, is there any formalized agenda or is it a little bit more casual, just kind of talking things over?

Interviewee: We, we brainstorm an agenda at the beginning of the meeting saying, you know, each of us saying, "OK, these are the things that I'm bringing, let's make sure we talk about it."

Vanessa: OK. All right. On the questionnaire itself, where I had asked the question, “Where have you learned to manage?” There's three areas I'm gonna talk about "staff and volunteers", "managing conflict", actually two areas you had indicated that the primary method you use and by the way, it was by far how everyone answered the question so you are not alone. You answered "trial and error". Can you say in that "trial and error" things that you have found that have worked for you and things that have not worked for you?

Interviewee: For managing conflict or...

Vanessa: Just in how you relate to staff, those two areas?

Interviewee: Sure. Yeah, I would say that there was a fairly steep learning curve coming into my position in terms of working with, especially working with volunteers. I am extremely overeducated. I have a, in addition to my MDiv, I have a PhD in Pastoral Care and Counseling and was never trained or took a class on volunteer or conflict management now, I think about it. And, and therefore, yeah, pretty much, on the ground kind of learned, you know, how, how to run meetings, how to manage, you know, conflicts so that folks are, feel heard and appreciated even when they're on kind of opposing sides, of, of whatever point we happen to be discussing that type of thing.

Vanessa: Have you had any situation, on a, with a 1-to-1 conflict that you felt did not resolve in a healthy way?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. I, I've, I've been a pastor for six years.

Vanessa: I, is there anything about that that you would be willing to share?

Interviewee: Sure. Yeah. No, there's, there have been times when people have left the church because they've had a conflict with me you know, over, over something. The most immediate one that stands out was with someone who wanted to teach in our Adult

Education program. Both I and the, the staff, decided as a whole that the, the program that they want to offer was not appropriate for our program wasn't, it, it wasn't needed and also, it wasn't the type of thing that we would offer. Tried to settle it as best as I could, you know, as, as slightly as I could, offering other, opportunities for leadership. In the, in the education program, I think I asked them to be on the Adult Education Committee. They took extreme offense to being told no. The senior pastor and I tried to do a, you know, sit down meeting with this person, kind of after the dust had settled several months later. And that person ended up accusing me of being really mean and nasty to them in ways that I don't remember being. And, I, you know, I said as much and, eventually they, you know, after yelling a little bit, they stormed out and I have not, not seen them since.

Vanessa: Well, that's a shame, but I, I understand that does happen.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: Do you find that conflict makes you, well, let me rephrase the question, conflict makes most people very uneasy and they feel ill-equipped. It's been my experience, by the way, just so, you know, I am a CEO also, I'm bi-vocational, I'm bringing 40 some odd years of running a company and many interactions with people over 40 some odd years in ministry experience. So that's why my project is focused on this particular area. But, so with that said, I find that most people are ill-equipped to manage conflict. Do you feel that if you had, had a little more training in seminary, it might have been helpful for you?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. I think a class on managing conflict, I definitely would have taken that and, you know, would have benefited greatly from it.

Vanessa: When you went to, you went to [University Name]. Correct?

Interviewee: I did. Yeah. Yeah.

Vanessa: Ok. I beg your pardon?

Interviewee: For my MDiv, I was at [University Name] for my doctorate.

Vanessa: Ok. When you were in your MDiv program, you had answered that you didn't receive really any training at all in, in the administrative leadership of staff in church, finance in any of those. Were any of those classes offered as electives that you can remember?

Interviewee: Possibly, been over a decade. And I actually went into the church from a different denomination that I ended up leaving. I didn't become a Presbyterian to my last year at [University Name]. I very well could have overlooked it, at the time. So, yeah. So that's, that's certainly a possibility. And, yeah, unfortunately I don't, have a, a better answer to that.

Vanessa: And that's ok. And it's been, I have done a lot of research on, and particularly Presbyterian, because I'm Presbyterian too. Presbyterian seminaries don't really, they're just now starting to think about, "Oh, gee, maybe these people could benefit a little bit from knowing how to, to deal with staff or understanding, you know, a balance sheet or understand how budgeting works and those types of things." So, you are not alone and not having either taking classes in most cases, I found that the classes aren't even offered. And so, and with the academic load you're expected to carry, it's difficult to get that elective in there and still meet all the requirements, particularly a PCUSA pastor. So, I can appreciate that. And that was difficult for you. If you could go back in time, would you have accepted the call that you accepted? Knowing what you know, now about this particular group of people?

Interviewee: That is a great question. I believe so, I believe I would.

Vanessa: OK. Is there anything in the call process that you wished that they had revealed to you?

Interviewee: Hm. There was yes, there was conflict within the congregation that they did not tell me about until my first day.

Vanessa: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Interviewee: You will, I assume you will not use the my, my church's name in it or anything.

Vanessa: Everything is just interviewee number X and no church names. If I needed to use a name, I would create a phony name and a phony location. So, and that's perfectly OK to do.

Interviewee: Yeah, there was, so my Head of Staff was relatively new to her position as well. She had been there a year when I got there and, there were people who were kind of like the old guard, primarily white men, who were doing their best to get rid of her. By the time that I got there, especially kind of, there was one leader of that kind of movement, but he was trying to get up support within it. And he ended up leaving the church about a year into my time there, but I did not, didn't know about that conflict and, and have seen that pattern play out with, with a number of kind of folks who have not appreciated, kind of the direction that our senior pastor has taken the church and, and have, have left. And I did not, there was no indication of that happening during the interviewer call process.

Vanessa: Do you feel this is a little touchier question but did the church lean to a more conservative viewpoint? And perhaps you and your new pastor had a more moderate or more liberal viewpoint that created the, that created in their mind conflict?

Interviewee: Historically [Church Name] has always seen itself as a, as a progressive Presbyterian church. But yes, the folks who had a problem with the senior pastor did not appreciate some of the more kind of activist stances that she was making at the time.

Vanessa: And during COVID, did you find that those differences calmed down or were exacerbated?

Interviewee: Exacerbated quite a bit.

Vanessa: You, you, I tell you, it's just like everyone has the same thing to say COVID. But the church, I don't wanna say it was a church killer because Christ won't allow that to happen, but it was a delineator for sure. So, I'm gonna switch gears here with this question and given your extensive educational background, that's probably have been an easy one for you. As you think about leadership, your call as a person, but in general leadership, are there specific biblical examples that you would rely on or that you would like to emulate or that you return to during times of stress or conflict?

Interviewee: Hm. That's a good question. I certainly appreciate the bumbling along of the disciples. I think that's, that's always been kind of a helpful kind of model. I always laugh at the, the episode is in all the synoptics where James and John asked Jesus to, you know, sit on places of honor as right hand and his left hand. And I, I just think it's so funny because he's like, kind of like, "Have you all not been paying attention at all? Like that's completely opposite of what I've been preaching this entire gospel." And then at, at some point they, you know, they get rejected in a town and they say like, "Lord, do you want us to try to call balls of fire to rain down on them?" And again, just, just completely not getting it. And Jesus is steady loving patience with, with his disciples. Just the, the grace shown to people who were leaders in the movement has been just, you know, a source of comfort. I think as I, I found myself bumbling along at times.

Vanessa: Yes, as we all have. As far as you had mentioned that managing the volunteers can be challenging and in your management of your Deacon Board and probably if you're doing education, you probably have volunteers in the education arena too. Do you have any selection process or that you yourself use or that your church has created to find those who might be suitable for those positions?

Interviewee: Well, of course, deacons go through the nominating committee. They do get feedback from senior staff about kind of like, you know, who would be a good fit, you know, who, who, who are we discerning have, have the, the gifts for you know, for ordained leadership in the church. But yeah, I mean, I, I would say like on a whole, I mean, it's just a prayerful, consideration of, kind of like, you know, what people's personalities are, what they are and also just kind of like what skills and background do they bring, you know, just professionally or personally, that type of thing? And that's, that's kind of the, the way that we go for, for deacons. For, teachers, it's, it's a bit more informal. I pretty much, you know, just look around the room at who's showing up for formation events and, and try to discern, kind of like who would be a good, you know, a good leader, a good teacher for, you know, X topic.

Vanessa: Yeah, that's fair. Have you noticed that volunteerism has declined since COVID?

Interviewee: Yes. There's certainly, it, it, this, past year nominating found it very hard to fill the slate of deacons and elders. A lot of people saying, no, a lot of people trying to, you know, protect their time, kind of just given all the stresses of post-COVID life. And we've also had, had, you know, a handful, two or three folks out of 21 deacons fall off as well to resign from their position just because they didn't feel like they could fulfill the responsibilities fully.

Vanessa: Yes, I fully appreciate that. Last question. You had indicated that you were interested in a seminar on "staff and volunteer accountability", "managing conflict", and "the basics of church finance" those three areas. Within those three areas, is there any anything, anything specifically that you would hope to see emphasized?

Interviewee: Oh, gosh. Certainly, just like just some basics of, kind of like how to build out a church budget, how to, you know, how to do stewardship seasons, that type of thing. I feel like I probably have a good handle on that now, but early on in my career that would have been very helpful. And, yeah, to, to see that offered. And also just like, you know, there's, there's been some interesting kind of like, what is it, like de-colonial, ways of approaching stewardship, you know, ways of like, looking at, looking at church finances, not so much like a business but rather kind of looking at through a lens of partnership and shared, shared wealth, making sure that that was a, was a part of it that wasn't just strictly like, you know, let's, you know, by the numbers or something like that.

Vanessa: Kind of like the early church did it?

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly.

Vanessa: Is there anything else that you would like to share with me that might, that I might find helpful?

Interviewee: No, nothing comes to mind. This has been very helpful though. I really appreciate your project and, I think, you know, it, it has a lot of promise to, to be a gift to the church. So, I just want to say thank you for doing this, this work and this research.

Vanessa: Yes, one more question. Just, just for my own edification. When I offer these seminars, they're gonna be, I will obviously I have your email so I'll send it to you directly. But I'm also gonna repost them on the platforms where I had posted. The questions are there times of the year that you find this type of, seminar is easier to take and it was...

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, I would definitely say, I mean, you, you, you, I'm sure you're well-acquainted with the church calendar, you know, post-summer and I mean, post-Easter and summer is obviously our best, you know, most free times.

Vanessa: That's what I was assuming. Just wanted to confirm my own, which is true for, I mean, I'm, we had 5 services and from Thursday to Sunday and both of us on Monday were like.

Interviewee: Yes, exactly.

Vanessa: So, ok, great. I wanna, first of all, thank you so much, [Interviewee]. I really, really appreciate your time. It helps me to focus my efforts to get a little bit more information from those who were willing to take the questionnaire and willing to be interviewed. So, I just want to thank you very, very much for your time today and I'm gonna stop the recording. Let me stop.

Pastor Interview #5

Vanessa: And before I begin, there's just a few, five or six questions. Let's open with a word of prayer.

Interviewee: Sure.

Vanessa: Gracious and Almighty God, I'm so grateful for this time that I can spend with [Interviewee] just talking about the work that he's doing in, in your kingdom and on behalf of your kingdom, Lord, so be with us as we spend this time together. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Interviewee: Amen.

Vanessa: So just a few background details that I didn't get from the survey because the survey is supposed to be somewhat blind. I can see you're Presbyterian. So, so am I.

Interviewee: Yup.

Vanessa: Yea!, How big, where is your church located [Interviewee]?

Interviewee: I'm in [City, State], which right, which is right in the center of the state of [State name].

Vanessa: And that's the name of the city? [City name]?

Interviewee: [City name]. Yeah, so we're like sort of a sister city situation. So, we have [City] in [City], which is right down the road. The headquarters of [Corporation Name] is here. So we have [Corporation Name] is a really big presence in our community so...

Vanessa: Have it. OK. And about how big is your church in terms of worship attendance because I know, you know, what we have on our rolls versus how many show up is...

Interviewee: Yeah, worship attendance is probably somewhere between 150 to 200...

Vanessa: Oh, good size!

Interviewee: ...on a weekly basis, yep.

Vanessa: That's great. And you've been there seven years. Is that correct?

Interviewee: Yes.

Vanessa: Is this your first call?

Interviewee: It is. I have a sort of a unique circumstance where seven years ago I was called here as the associate, and three years ago, I was, I went through a transition process and became the senior pastor here. So, sort of an unusual thing in, in, in the denomination, but that's the, the road that the Lord put out before me. So, yeah,

Vanessa: That's happening more and more actually. Our denomination has loosened up on our polity. They used to be absolutely forbidden and they realized that, you know, times are changing.

Interviewee: Yeah, Yeah.

Vanessa: So, can you give me just an overview of what your, maybe a typical week or month, might look like for you as you do your work as a pastor?

Interviewee: Sure. So, I take my Sabbath Day on Fridays. So that's the, the day that I'm off and try to not look at email. I try to, you know, not really answer text messages or anything like that that come from church members. And so, for me, like my week starts on Mondays. My week always starts, there's a men's Bible study breakfast that meets Monday mornings. So, I always start my week with that, by attending that, with about 12 to 15 of the older men of our congregation. But any given day or week is usually, you know, some combination of prescheduled meetings that I have, whether that's a congregation member who really wants to connect with me over something or, a committee meeting or, you know, a, I pretty much every day of my week I have one-on-ones with my staff at any given point. But then I also, you know, take a chunk out of my day for, you know, sort of unplanned time, time where I know folks will pop in or things that require my attention. But then also just administrative, you know, working through the emails that I get, making the communication, introductions that I need to make for certain issues or, you know, to, you know, communicate certain issues or plan certain programs or things along that nature. I don't typically start my sermon preparations until Tuesdays just because I, you know, usually use Monday as like a catch-up day, like, even though I was just in the church the day before for worship, you know, Monday is always a day where I try to get caught up. The first thing I do when I come in after Bible study on Mondays is make my to-do list for the week so that I can prioritize items that I know, you know, in level of severity of like how much they require my attention that week and what items can I put to the week after or, you know, down the road or things like that. For my sermon preparation process, I typically try to start Tuesday after I've finished planning the liturgy and the order of worship, but that is always somewhat fluid. One thing that I am pretty rigid on is I always try to have my sermon finished, written, rehearsed by 2:30 on Thursdays so that when I go home later that day, I'm not taking a sermon home to finish. I'm, I'm fully available for my, my wife and my kids. So, yeah, and then evenings, I mean, on a good week, I have maybe one or two meetings that I have to go to at night. On a bad week or a busy week, I'm, I'm, you know, there, there are some weeks where I have a meeting, you know, three or four nights a week, which is, you know, not sustainable and something that we're even working to kind of change in terms of the scheduling and the life model here at the church. So, yeah.

Vanessa: Ok. And how many direct reports do you have that, that you would consider to be like paid staff?
Interviewee: Yeah. So, at this point, most of the staff directly report to me because of the way we structured our associate role. So, in terms of staff members that like, I have one-on-ones with that, like a weekly meeting just with me and them, I have four staff members that I meet with in that regard and then there are a few other staff members that are part time that like, I don't have a one-on-one with, but like, I'm, you know, like our administrative assistant, I don't have a one-on-one with her because we interact a lot. But our staff in its entirety, you know, consists of me, two part-time associate pastors who were actually a married couple. So initially we were looking for a single associate but they reached out to us about us pursuing a possibility of hiring a clergy couple and the church, you know, found great opportunity there. So, two associate pastors, I have a full-time director of family ministry, a full-time director of music and worship, and then we have administrative assistant, property manager, a A/V tech specialist, and then she's not, she, she doesn't function like a typical employee in terms of like reporting to me, but our director of the preschool is also full-time.

Vanessa: Oh, you have a preschool, too?

Interviewee: We do. Yeah.

Vanessa: On your one-to-ones that you do weekly, is that an informal process or is that more formalized?

Interviewee: I have a structure that I try to follow but I, I try to make that space casual. So, my one-on-ones always start with the, the same question all the time is, “How are you?” And you know, when my staff first come on board or things like that and occasionally, I'll remind them like, that's my, that's me asking about them, not as an employee, not as a, a person managing program, but like, how are they doing as people, what's going on in their life. If there's something in particular, I know that, you know, is pertinent to their story like, “Hey, you know, your daughter just graduated high school, like, how are you doing with that?” And, or, if there was a health challenge or you know, if you know, one of my staff adopted a dog, like, “Hey, you know, adding a dog to the house, that can be kind of crazy. How's that going for you?” You know, I just, I try to spend a good chunk of the opening time with my one-on-one just letting them know that I see them as people and care about them as people. And so, you know, if they do express or open up about something personal going in their life that's a challenge, I always put forward, you know, is there anything I can do to help you in that? Any form of support I can give? And that, you know, that's looked like anything from praying for them in that space, being a listening ear, you know, several times it's been me telling them like, “Hey, when our one-on-one is over, why don't you take the rest of the day and just go spend some time? Like, why don't you just go take some time with your spouse or you know, your kids are in school? Why don't you take that time to, to go home and you know, have some time just to yourself. Sounds like you have a lot that you're going through.” So just, you know, try to offer them whatever I can. And then I, the final two questions that I asked them is, “What are they working on and how can I advocate for them?” You know,

I tell them, “How can I help them win?” So, I try to be very vocal with my staff and very consistent with them to, for them to be able to communicate, you know, what a win looks like. So, you know, for family ministry, for instance, our director is heading out this afternoon for our overnight camp program that we do. So, talking with her like, you know, I wanted her to be able to communicate like, what does a win look like? What does a successful camp program look like? And, so I always ask my staff at the end of our one-on-ones, like, “What can I do? How can I use my presence influence, like, whatever, to, you know, help you? How can I play a lead blocker,” and, and that kind of thing. So, they tell me what they're working on and then I see how I can help them. And usually that's where we conclude the meeting. So...

Vanessa: OK, great. On the questionnaire, you did indicate that you had taken additional workshops, both in managing staff and volunteers, conflict management, but you also indicated trial and error. So, can you tell me when you first came out of seminary and you started, I guess here as, as an associate, what did you gravitate towards? Did you realize that you needed some more formal training or did you just kind of plow through? Did your senior pastor guide you? How did you go about that?

Interviewee: Yeah. So, in terms of like leadership and management, my like desire to grow and to learn really came out of necessity because I was sort of thrust into the role that I'm in now to some degree. Our previous senior pastor, who I was hired beneath, he went kind of an untraditional route. It was, I think the summer of 2018 or ‘17. He took three weeks of vacation in August, came back and then took three months of continuing education leave, that he had, had stored up and built up from not using it. Came back in December and then in January, left for a six-month sabbatical. In between his continuing education and sabbatical, he announced that he would be retiring upon return from his sabbatical. So, for the, you know, for the better part of a year, I was the only pastor on staff in, while he was, you know, tending to his matters. And then when he retired, I was retained as the interim head of staff. And one of the things that I identified really quickly was like, you know, I, I love the people I serve with, I enjoy working with them. I want them to succeed, I want to do what I can, but I don't have the tools to do it. I just, it's not, it wasn't in my training as much because I came from a student ministry background. So, I knew how, I knew how to advocate for lay volunteers, but I didn't know how to advocate for paid staff members. So that's why I like looked into, you know, I'm, I'm a big resource person, so I love, I love reading, I love leaning into podcasts and that kind of stuff. But I wanted to find some more formalized training, some modular training that I could, you know, use and, and, you know, use as an advantage and as a gift to my congregation. So that's why I really started looking into those sorts of programs. But yeah.

Vanessa: OK. And you indicated, because I am going to, I'm creating four seminars actually, and they're gonna be held two in July and two in August and you'll be invited, of course, but you had indicated that you were interested in those. Is there anything specific within those rather broad areas that particularly, that you, as an individual pastor, are particularly interested in. Some area that you feel like, “Oh man, I'm just so weak or, or unskilled,” whatever you wanna call it, in a particular area.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, I think that there's when it comes like, I think it'd be easy for a pastor to say like, administration tasks is, is an area where they want to improve. But like, that's an area that like, I've had to really sort of figure out. But I think that one of the areas that is one that I, I saw a massive gap in my seminary formation was just church finance awareness and training. You know, we were told there's a budget, you know, they, they told, they talked about the biblical support for a tithing model but actually, you know, being a manager of church finances, which thankfully I'm not, we have a financial coordinator here at the church, but I still play a pretty prevalent role in all of our financial conversations. That's just an area where I am, I was and I increasingly becoming less so, but woefully ignorant, and came in with very little preparation, or, training in that. I, I think that, you know, I would use the word weakness, but I would also use it as just a,a word of giftedness, like I, pastoral care spaces are not my strength. So, for me personally, I can preach two services on a Sunday morning, I can lead a Sunday school class that morning, I can do a lot of face-to-face interactions with people, and I can finish the afternoon off like a hummingbird. But if you put me in a situation where I'm in an intense pastoral care situation or in a hospital room setting or those sorts of things, I could be in there for 30 minutes and I, I am completely drained by the end of it. That's just not where my energy flows. And I think some of that comes from just I, I liken it to when folks ride a bike with gear shifts and they're riding the bike in the wrong gear so, it makes it they have to make harder and harder and harder pushes with their leg muscles in order to move the bike even a moderate amount of space. I just don't have the, the arrows in my quiver to know like what to do. Like, I, I've read tons of resources and, and listen to speakers on it and stuff and I understand the, the concepts of presence and just being there, but I'm not a person who's comfortable just being with someone who's hurting and having nothing to contribute to them. And sitting in a room just with them with no words, I think it makes for a very eloquent and moving paragraph in a person's book, but I don't, I haven't always been able to find like the, the real-life interpretation of that where it's, it's valuable. And so even just knowing like general framework of visits should last this long or in this situation you want to lean towards this, here are four or five helpful questions that can, you know, you know, be an opportunity for you to engage with that person and let them know about your presence and your desire to serve them and to be with them. You know, I think that some of my, some of my, you know, lack of energy around pastoral care is just how I'm made up. It's just a, a reflection of, of who I am and how God wired me. But some of it is also just that, like, I, I don't feel like I have a lot of good resources or tricks in order to bolster that, you know, preconceived weakness, so.

Vanessa: I, I can appreciate that. Our, our associate pastor at our church is exactly the same way. I'm actually the exact opposite. I love doing that part, but I like the administration part too so...

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Vanessa: ...you're in that area. When you were in seminary you went to, where did you go [Seminary Name], no?

Interviewee: Yep, [Seminary Name]. Yeah.

Vanessa: OK, beside church finance, was there any other area that you feel like you wish that you had taken a class on or wish they had offered a class and made it maybe even part of the core classes that you were required to take, even if you maybe didn't realize you should take it?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, I think that some of it is just, this might be true of, of any denomination, but I feel like the identity of the pastor is just taught in sort of an outdated model. And, and so like for me, I didn't receive any training there, there was no class about administration and by administration, I don't just mean finance, like how to be an effective head of staff, right? I, so much training about how to be an effective pastor, but when it comes to like, how do I effectively serve and advocate for my staff members? That, that wasn't there. It was something I really had to either glean from my experience of being a lay person, I was a, a full-time director of a youth ministry for a, a large PCS, a church in [City], [State] for eight years. And so, I had, I could glean into that and see like, well, here's what worked and here's definitely what didn't work. And then a lot of it was other forms of training, reading, engagement, talking to colleagues who I just got the perception or sense that they were really good at that. You know, I, there, there was a class that I think they hoped it would be about pastoral identity, but like literally like 20 minutes of one of those class lectures was spent with a diagram of how to set your table. Like literally like your salad fork goes here, you know, there were references to like, you know, silencing your pager. Just woefully and, and almost comically out of date. And so, you know, there was no training to help me be a leader of an organization. There was only training for me to be a spiritual shepherd. And I think that in this day and age, that just doesn't, that didn't, that hasn't served me well. I should say, there might be some context where a pastor doesn't need that training as much. But for me that was a place where I was, just lacking. And so I, I would say those, two areas, are, are ones that really came up, but then also I, I think that engaging and leading through conflict is probably something that deserves more than, a module or a section of a particular class and could be a class in and of itself. Because...

Vanessa: Well, lucky you because we have a whole class just in managing conflict!

Interviewee: ...yeah, yeah, I mean, and I, I, I really feel like that's something that would be extremely valuable because I manage conflict, you know, with individual congregation members. I manage conflict with a, you know, societal conflict of, you know, just the church isn't what it used to be, right? There are no more sacred days there, you know, the church doesn't hold its influence anymore. Christendom is, is, you know, on its dying breath. You know, I deal with conflict with people who in terms of engaging matters and issues of social justice and awareness that, you know, riddle our country. But like people come to the church for answers, I deal with managing conflict during our elder meetings. So, I, I think that conflict in general could be a, a class in and of itself.

Vanessa: So, and I, and I agree, which is why I'm including it because I, many pastors that I've spoken to, if you would look at their, Minnesota Multiple Personality, their profile or an Ennegram or something like that, you would find that they're really well suited to be a pastor, but they're not very well suited to manage conflict.

Interviewee: Yes, yeah.

Vanessa: And so, it's, and managing conflict is a challenge.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: I mean, it, it's not easy and that I can well, I, because I'm bi-vocational and I own a business and I'm a CEO...

Interviewee: Okay.
Vanessa: ...I've learned how to manage conflict over many years.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: It's something that you can train on, but it really is something that takes practice before you can become good at it, although we'll have, as I go through the, the class on managing conflict, I will have concrete ideas and suggestions.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: And what I have found in my reading and research over the last year and a half is a lot of what is written is not, is, it's nicely written, you know, it's nice to read but it doesn't really tell you what to do.

Interviewee: Correct. Yeah, yeah.

Vanessa: That's where I see the gap.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: You know, it'll talk in lofty terms about, the administration of, of, you know, hiring staff, but it doesn't really tell you how to interview.

Interviewee: Right.

Vanessa: It doesn't really tell you how to manage conflict. It doesn't really tell you what you should do, what, what, how, how budgets are formulated or what a balance sheet looks like those kinds of things.

Interviewee: Yeah, one hundred percent.

Vanessa: So, I'm trying to focus on the practical rather than just theory, the, theoretical. Now, of course, I have to have theoretical, not part of my training, but as part of my writing because it goes to the academy so, you know, they're looking for that. OK. And speaking of theologically, as you think theologically as a pastor, are there biblical

examples that you draw from that you specifically really like and you draw from in your leadership role?

Interviewee: Yeah. So, there's a model, and it, it comes from an image that Jesus used, but I have a, a painting in my office, on my wall. So, it's the first thing that I see when I walk into my office, but it's also placed so, it's the first thing anyone who meets with me sees when they come in my office. It's a picture of a, a table, a dining room table with a whole bunch of mismatched, random chairs around it and says "There is a place for you." So very similar to like the great banquet language. But, a model that I, hold to, an image that I really champion a lot is that there truly is a place for everyone. It doesn't matter what the seat "looks" like, it doesn't matter the story of the person who sits there. But the, the table of, of at least this particular church and I use that sacramentally, but I also use that in terms of vocabulary and uh you know, theological expression, there is a place for everyone. And so, you know, our church has made some, and are currently making some pretty strong endeavors for that. And that is something that I think is a very lofty, altruistic, you know, glittery thing that you can say. But it also keeps me very honest because it means that in those moments where I don't want a particular person at the table or a particular table, I have to catch myself on that.

Vanessa: That's, good for you.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, because there are right and I, I think all of us if we're in church leadership, you know, there's obviously healthy examples of it where like there's a person who is just, they would not be healthy sitting in the chair of like a ruling elder, right? Like they, they have things going on in their life right now where that would not be healthy or valuable for them. But I think all of us as pastors, we also like, think like that person would be a nightmare on, you know, on staff or those sorts of things.

Vanessa: It's so true.

Interviewee: Yeah. And sometimes those intuitions are valid and I think that they're valid enough to communicate with the chair of the nominating committee. But sometimes they're just selfish and so, like, I have to catch myself on that. I have to catch my elders on that. I have to catch my staff on that. It, you know, one of the ways that it, it plays out for me frequently is I try very hard to make as much face time and presence with our small children in the congregation on Sunday mornings as I do with our senior adults. The senior adults are the ones who want to be seen by me, they want to be engaged by me and things like that. But I go out of my way to make sure that I, you know, get down on one knee and get to the level of the kid and let them see their pastor like and tell them like, "I'm really glad you're here," and, you know, things like that. So, I would say that's probably the most predominant model that I use biblically or theologically in my ministry. So, yeah, I think I'll, I'll leave that there.

Vanessa: Okay. The, just, last question, it's about volunteerism.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: I have been finding in my research and in talking to a lot of different people from not just Presbyterian denominations, but, you know, all types of denominations, that recruiting volunteers is becoming increasingly more difficult. Have you experienced that, particularly since the time of COVID?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean, I would say that even before COVID, [Church Name] suffered from like the classic, you know, 20/80 problem - 20% of the people do 80% of the work. That hasn't gotten any easier. We're, we're trying right now with a new form of stewardship engagement, not financial related but engagement related, to create just open doors to remedy that. But, yeah, I mean, I think that getting people to volunteer for things is hard in general just because the number of people in our own communities, and I know that this is true for [City], but I think it's true for other areas as well. I think that, you know, it, it's not meant to be an alarming statement, but I think people are just less committed to the church today than they were 15, 20 years ago...

Vanessa: Yeah. That's true.

Interviewee: ...and that's not, I, I don't think that's because people love Jesus less. I think it's partially because they have so many other good commitments that like, you know, and I, I might be, you know, fudging myself here a bit, but like, I, I love the analogy, the, the saying that like the enemy of, of great isn't evil, the enemy of great is good. And I think that our people have so many good things in their lives that, you know, contributing to the great of what the work God's doing in the church ends up becoming just another good thing.

Vanessa: Uh huh.

Interviewee: And so, when, when service in the church or, you know, volunteering in the church becomes just another activity on the calendar you know, just another obligation that has to be met, it's easy to let those things go. It's easy to say no. And I think, you know, that's hard and that's sad. And so, you know, we're trying really hard here right now throughout the course of this summer to help our folks rethink what it means for them to be involved in the church. And I, I know like as, as lofty as our, you know, stewardship committee meetings are like, and, and the goals that we have, I know that there are gonna be people that don't, don't say yes. And I think that that problem is only gonna get harder, especially for, I wouldn't say that we are aggressively program driven here, but like we are, we are a programmatic church, no doubt. And for churches that are very program heavy that don't have the resources that, say like a mega church environment might have, that problem is only gonna get worse. So, I think it's gonna eventually lead to a rethinking of the model of ministry that many churches are doing in terms of sustainability and health, in terms of, in terms of alignment with vision and code and charism within the church, but I think every congregation will have to deal with that, so.

Vanessa: So, so I just want to let, I'm gonna ask your permission. As I'm writing things up, everybody is just like interview number, interviewee number four or six or

whatever, so that will be the case, but your comment about the idea of great and good and stuff really resonated with me. So, with your permission, I might want a direct quote that when I write it, but I won't use your name or your church name. It'll just be interviewee number.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah, that's fine. Anything that I've said that you have recorded on here, feel free to use in any fashion that's, that's beneficial for your work.

Vanessa: Ok, I appreciate that. That was one of the best ones I've heard and I've interviewed a lot of people so, I'm gonna give you like props for that. Ok. Do you have any questions of me? You will probably, I'm not gonna release, open the sign-ups probably till a couple of weeks before the very first one because people tend to, if it's too far out, they'll, they tend to ignore it. If it's too close it, you know...

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: ...it's a sweet spot getting that. So probably around the first of July will be when I open up the sign-ups for the workshops and you'll get an email with a link that allow you to go and, and decide. Everything is free, of course, because it's part of my dissertation work...

Interviewee: Sure.

Vanessa: ...and what will be included after the workshops will be the guidebook that I am writing...

Interviewee: Okay, cool.

Vanessa; ...which will have quite a bit of detail as compared, I mean, the workshop will have detail but not as much detail as I would put in a written document. So that would be like you finish the workshop and via email, you get this, this portion of the workbook.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Vanessa: So just let you know that's how it works.

Interviewee: That's wonderful, yeah!

Vanessa: Ok. Is there anything you want to ask me before we finish today?

Interviewee: No, I don't think so. Yeah, I hope this has been helpful.

Vanessa: So, it's been very helpful. I'm gonna stop the recording.

Appendix E: Interview Questions for Executive Pastors

Interview Questions for Executive Pastors

1) Have you had any formal education in the areas of administration including personnel management, conflict resolution, and financial management? Did you receive any of this training within your theological training to be a pastor?

2) How would you define the term "executive pastor"?

3) Can you give me an overview of your daily, weekly, and monthly leadership responsibilities?

4) Can you tell me what, if any, specific training or experience you have had in the following areas:
    a. Personnel management – hiring, training, delegating, monitoring, and terminating
    b. Conflict resolution management – specifically with staff and volunteers
    c. Financial Management – understanding the basics of balance sheets, profit and loss statements, and budgets
        i. If your training/experience was primarily in the for-profit sector, do you find the not-for-profit sector different and if so, in what ways?

5) Are there some areas within the three previous categories of management that you find particularly challenging? And if so, why?

6) What are the most challenging aspects of your job and why?
    a. Can you give me an example(s)?

7) How do you bridge the secular aspects of administrative leadership with the sacred aspects of being a pastor?

8) As you think theologically, are there specific biblical examples of leadership that you draw from and can you share them with me and tell my how they help you in your position?

9) Do you believe you have encountered any prejudice about your leadership style and execution due to perceived strengths or weaknesses relating to race, gender, or other?

    a. If yes, can you give me an example of what happened and how you chose to address the situation?

Appendix F: Executive Pastor Interview Transcriptions

Executive Pastor Interview #1

Vanessa: Alrighty. Now, can you tell me just so I have it for the record, where you received all of your theological training.

Interviewee 1: My theological training has come from a few different places. So, I have a, I have two degrees from [University Name], [City, State]. One of those is in Christian education. The other, I have a Masters of Divinity from [Seminary Name], now known as [Seminary Name]. And then I am in the writing stages of a DMin from [University Name].

Vanessa: Okay.

Interviewee 1: That's what we are.

Vanessa: A fellow DMin. Thank you for that. Just to tell you, just so you know a little bit about who I am, I'm a bi-vocational pastor, I am a commissioned lay pastor for the presbytery of Los Ranchos, my home church, Canyon Hills. I do most of my work for that particular church, but I am commissioned for all the 40 churches within our Presbytery. I am the CEO of a business, so I have two business degrees and then I got my Masters of Theology from Fuller and now I am at New York getting my Doctor of Ministry. So that's who I am. In all of your education, did you have any formal training in administration, with, particularly in managing personnel, managing conflict resolution, and in finance - those three areas?

Interviewee 1: No formal education in those three specific areas. So, I have my masters in Christian Ed, it’s an administrative degree, but there weren't those specific areas that you articulated.

Vanessa: And so, if you did not have training in those areas, and I understand from Dr. Pitts that you're actually quite good in those areas, how did you develop your skills in those areas?

Interviewee 1: Well, I think, you know, one is I have a spiritual gift of administration, but just over time where I have been, you know, I ran our youth department and it wasn't just running kids at our church. It was, you know, securing contracts with the camp, you know, learning the various laws and stuff as you go. So, really over time situationally, and then I have, I just have a predisposition towards at administration and kind of in every job, not just with what I've done in the church, but even what I did in the nonprofit arena have had a leaning towards administration. And so, it's that kind of stuff has fascinated me, interest me and I was able to kind of learn as I went.

Vanessa: Okay. I appreciate that. I noticed on your website you are now the senior pastor at your church.

Interviewee 1: I am and I'm an administrative senior pastor.

Vanessa: How would you define if you were going to define that term "executive pastor", which is used, I think, somewhat loosely across various denominations. How would you define that?

Interviewee 1: Yeah. So, I would define the executive pastor broadly, not just to mean at administrative or like otherwise, but broadly to mean the ability to manage, lead, and direct ministries in a variety way which is not limited to finance, people management, visioning, and vision implementation, right? So, they have to have some visioning of their own, but the ability to, to implement the pastoral vision. I have two executive pastors, they're very new, just started in July so it's a big move for us at our church and I've designed those positions. One is an Executive Pastor of Operations which takes care of administrative things as well as the property, the grounds, etcetera, has responsibility for that. Then the Executive Pastor of Ministries takes care of all of the ministry execution as it relates to direct ministry that we do, right? So, you have an administrative arm and then more of your direct ministry people arm, if you will.

Vanessa: Now, for those two positions, particularly the first, the executive pastor of operations, did you write out a job description or....

Interviewee 1: Both have job descriptions.

Vanessa: Would you be willing to, if I keep, of course, everything in confidence, would you be willing to share those job descriptions with me?

Interviewee 1: I can. That's not a problem.

Vanessa: I would really appreciate that. I will email you as a reminder. Which is better for you - email or text?

Interviewee 1: Email. You send an email, that way I can send it back to you via email.

Vanessa: Okay, great. Can you describe, just kind of give me an overview of, you know, what your day looks like, what your week looks like?

Interviewee 1: Well, I, as a senior pastor, my week is extremely busy and very, and so, I am you know, I still lead the staff while I have executive pastors, I do my own staff meetings. I lead those so I have an idea of what's going on in the ministry. And so, I have staff meetings on Tuesday. Monday is technically my rest day. Staff meetings and meetings in general on Tuesday. So, for example, tomorrow will have, I'll have, individual meetings, an hour to an hour and ten minutes with each executive pastor just to kind of understand what they're doing. We meet twice a month in what I call an

“individual” - that's from my days as a social worker, social workers always have an individual with their supervisor. So, I have an individual meeting with them and we do that twice a month. This week happens to be that for them, then our staff meeting, it's about two hours. In our staff meeting, we also, it's not just what do we think about Sunday, what's going on next week, what do we have ahead of us, but it's also a Bible study. So, we're in this week, this, this particular book is not a Bible study - it's a growth opportunity. We're reading Together Growing Young by Kara Powell, Jake Mueller, and Brad Griffin, because we feel like it's important that our church starts to grow young so that we have longevity. So, if I want to teach something to the congregation, I start with the staff. And so, we work through that there and then I have other meetings. I've got, we're starting a building project. I have a meeting for that tomorrow. I have a funeral on Wednesday. I try to be on our prayer line. Wednesday is prayer day. We have prayer three times on Wednesday. And then I'm working on a podcast with some other pastors on Thursday. I'm part of a pastor mentor group that will take place on Thursday. And then Thursday, Friday, I really try to hone in on what's going to be preached on Sunday. And then I'm on some various boards and committees and different things like that. So that's, that's a typical week and, and then try and squeeze in their time to, to write this dissertation.

Vanessa: Well, sounds like you're super, super busy.

Interviewee 1: I’m very busy.

Vanessa: I appreciate your time even more.

Interviewee 1: No problem.

Vanessa: You're, you're bi-monthly meeting with your two executive pastors - How do you, how do you set the agenda for those. Do they give you, do you have a set form you use? Do you have an update?

Interviewee 1: No, so what I do with them is for the meeting, so we actually have, so I meet with both of them together on the first Tuesday of the month. On that meeting, I bring the agenda. When they meet with me for their bi-monthly individual meet, they bring the agenda. So, it's their responsibility to write up the agenda, copy it, or print it out, and bring it to me. I don't, I like physical paper. So bring me a piece of paper so I can write on it. And then when we start the meeting, I'll say, “Thank you for the agenda. Here's some things I want to talk about as well that may have come to me in the last week or two”, and then we'll add those other things, but it's an opportunity for them to update me and then it's an opportunity for me to assign new tasks. Maybe I saw something at our [Church Name] Day on yesterday that I want them to consider and get ahead of, you know, for next time or next event, that kind of thing. But when the individual meeting is considered their meeting, bring to me what you need when we meet together as a group, the three of us, I bring the agenda, and I type it out, and I give it to them.

Vanessa: So, when you have the individual, individual meetings and they give you their agenda, do you ask it, ask for it in advance so you can review it or do they just give it to you at the beginning of the meeting?

Interviewee 1: They can give it to me at the beginning of the meeting. Sometimes they give it to me ahead of time, but generally I'm not caught off guard or by surprise by much of it. So as long as they bring it, it'll help me. Sometimes I'll say, “Okay, so what's this?” just because of the way they may have titled an agenda item. But other than that, no, they can bring it that day and I'm, I'm generally good.

Vanessa: Okay. Over the course of your ministry experience, when it comes to personnel, where have you learned how to manage personnel with respect to, particularly in California, which you understand California labor law is quite challenging. So where have you picked up that particular skill to, to learn how to hire, to interview, to delegate? Everything around the HR function?

Interviewee 1: Yeah, so first off, I've been interviewing now, I've been at [Church Name] 20 years, but I've served as a manager and hiring individual for the last 25 years, at least, Last 25 years when I worked in social work, I had social workers under me so I do those interviews, I do individuals with them, that kind of stuff. So, I, in, in my just kind of interviewing and hiring, I've kinda, you know, learned it on the job, right? For California specifically, I go to a lot of workshops. So, with, for our church, our insurance company, they do lots of workshops for, for churches, for HR. We just went to one Tuesday before last, so the last Tuesday in July. Not July, I'm sorry, January, we just did one and I took myself, the two executive pastors, and then our HR designee. And so, we all four of us went. The HR designee is also known as our business manager. She and I have been doing this together for a long time now, at least seven or eight years. And so, we go to this boot camp every year and we listen to, this particular boot camp, gives you all the new laws, helps you to understand, you know, what's changing. But we keep a watch on California. California is extremely difficult, as you know, it's extremely difficult because things are always changing and things are not in favor of employers, very in favor of employees. And I get it except for when there is, except for when the, except for when employers, I think, are doing a good job, there's no room for that. Then you also have to be aware of the ecclesiastical exemption where it fits and where it doesn't. So, we, I, air by going to those workshops and then doing research myself. There are a lot of little things to pay attention to and all of that stuff, Vanessa is, is very budget inhibiting, right? Because it makes it very difficult when the, when the, when we just went and use some laws were for 25 and lower and then some of these new laws post-pandemic are, doesn't matter what size organization is, that kind of stuff really challenges your, your, your budget. And so, I just had to, I understand, my mind understands that. And so, I've learned over time, but those HR bootcamps are very helpful.

Vanessa: So, kind of along those lines within the structure of your church, if I understand the structure correctly, you have a board of directors. Is that correct?

Interviewee 1: Well, technically, the way are, we don't have a board of directors. We wouldn't call it that. We have a what we call trustee ministry. Their responsibility is assets of the church, finances of the church. And then we have a deacon ministry. We don't, we try not to use this term board, but deacon ministry, deacons help with the spiritual advancement of the church. And so the two come together. I am held accountable by the chair of the trustees and the chair of the deacon ministry.

Vanessa: Interesting.

Interviewee 1: Yeah.

Vanessa: So, when it comes to conflict, I'm sure you never experienced conflict in your church or with your staff (implied opposite sentiment), but how do you go about resolving conflict, either with staff or with, with your volunteers?

Interviewee 1: I think it all depends. With staff, you know, we tend to be more direct and, you know, accountable. All staff works for the senior pastor, all staff works for the senior pastor. And so, they're all directly accountable to me. I put in place a structure where they answer to other people, right? And so, the executive pastor of operations has a group that answers to him, the executive pastor of ministries has a group that answers to him. I prefer for you to work through uplines and for those that have direct supervision, to handle problems before they get to me. It is very rare and there are some things that I still direct. Remember, I've been at [Church Name] 20 years, I've been its pastor 10. [Church Name] is almost 60 years old. So, there are some things that somebody that just started working in a position six months ago does not know. So, I have to help them to understand and do that, but I do try to empower them to make some of those decisions. There, there, there are changes we're making now, and one of my executive pastors felt like an individual could stay, it was a contract employee and I was like, it's not getting any better. And so, we have conversations, we work through it. If things escalate, then we bring in deacons. But generally, our deacon chair and our trustee chair try to stay out of the day-to-day operations of the church.

Vanessa: Okay.

Interviewee 1: That's the responsibility of the, of the staff and the senior pastor. And if I need help, then I can pull them in.

Vanessa: Okay. Has there, have you experienced this conflict situation that you found particularly difficult to resolve?

Interviewee 1: I don't know that I've had a situation I felt, that I felt was difficult to resolve. I think it's the nature of the church, Vanessa. The nature of the church is, it is difficult for us to kind of we, we expect that everybody will just get along and that it will all be okay and it'll work. And so, when that doesn't happen, we experience these dichotomies of thought and cognitive dissonance because we're trying to figure out what do I do because I, I love the individual - I don't necessarily love their work product, I

don't necessarily love their approach, and we know I've had to release people and I've had people, in their immediate reaction, leave the church or you know, that kind of stuff, and then eventually they come back. I'm one that passes olive branches. I can tell you honestly that in the, the opportunities, the situations where I had to release individuals, at least 80% of those have been resolved relationally because that's important to me. But you, you can't, you can't let things fester and you can't let things go either. I am big on this. We work as unto the Lord, right? Colossians Chapter Three, "We, we, we work as unto the Lord" - and if we are not doing our jobs effectively, efficiently, if we are, are, are not honest and true in our work product, those types of things, then we are actually stealing from God. We're stealing finances, were stealing money though that, that's my, my view and I, and I'm, I'm very, I'm very direct in that we must give God our best. You know, like you hear this stuff about silent quitting where people do that on these jobs and then they, their work product. I don't think we get to do that with the Lord's money and, and finances. I think that we have to meet you. I say stuff like, "I treat God's money like I treat mine" and I take care of my money and I do the very same thing with, with God's money and finances and accountability, those types of things. And so that's important to me. But you have conflict, you work through it. I don't think that it's easy. I'm not, I don't, I don't like, I'm not one of those people that "yeah, I'm looking for conflict" but when it comes up, I try to deal with it as, as quickly as possible.

Vanessa: So, when you have conflict with staff you had said, I noticed that you said earlier, that you're direct with your staff. How about when you have conflict with a volunteer, whether they be part of the trustee or your deacons? Does...

Interviewee 1: I still, I still am very direct. I gotta be honest, I want to get to the thing. I remember having a situation, it wasn't, and all groups are relative, but I had a leader over what we call our deaconess ministry. They're not deacons directly, but one of the things that she was having a lot of difficulty with her group and we had conversations and you know, she'd say some things that she had said to the group and one of the things she says, "Well, you know, I told them, the Lord told me." I said there's a problem when you do that. When you say, "the Lord told me", no one can, can argue with it. You don't give people the space to challenge a decision. And so, they go mute. The reason they don't, they don't say anything in the meeting is because you close the opportunity for a conversation. And even if you feel like God said it, it's best approached by saying, "You know, this is the direction I feel we should go in. Are there any concerns questions that you might have for me?" Then people feel like they can ask a question. But when you, I don't even say, even if I feel God said it, I don't say it because I feel like it can be controlling for, for people and they don't get the opportunity. So, for me, that example, Vanessa, is a direct conversation. I'm not good at kind of shying. If there's a problem, I try to deal with it but I think I have a, a, a welcoming personality to where we can get through it. It doesn't, you know, sometimes it doesn't, it doesn't work. I'm not at, I've had some situations where people, you know, they, they either work very direct with me or they weren't very honest with themselves and it didn't, you know, work or they had to think about it later. But I don't, I don't, when I say direct, I guess the other word would be honest, but I don't try to kind of, you know, snake around it and figure out another way. I

just, I want us to, to be able to get along and do the work of ministry with each other for what God has called us to do.

Vanessa: Were you successful with this one individual?

Interviewee 1: Yeah. You know, she said to me when I said that she said, “Okay, granted. I hear you.” And then she, she worked, she, she really worked on the communication piece. Now, she only, you can generally lead, I think that ministry you can lead as president in our structure, two years in a row. I think she only did one but she had some other things going on in her life. And so, she was able to release and relinquish, but I, I think that her tenure got better in that particular situation. She had some of her own personality issues, but I do think she worked on it. You can't resolve everything. Some stuff is just who we are, right? But I do believe she worked on it to, to be better in terms of how she led.

Vanessa: Great. Thank you. When it comes to financial management, I know that you have trustees that manage your assets. But would you say that you have a fairly good understanding of the basics of your church's finances as far as like a balance sheet, profit and loss, budget, that type of thing?

Interviewee 1: Yeah, so the, the, the, the trustees are there for accountability purposes. The day-to-day running of the budget still falls on me and my team. And so not only do I have an executive pastor of operations but under him is a, we've been calling it a finance manager. We're actually gonna change the title because we're not getting, we're getting too high. We need to replace that position. We're getting too high an applicant and we can't afford them, we can't pay them. So, we're gonna call it a church accountant. And so, we have a church accountant and then the business manager, those three positions, even with the executive pastor of ministries help me with finances, but just, just so you remember my, my personality of my person. I am very good at this. When we go to, because I need to know these, these numbers because the church trusts me as their pastor to know them. So, when we go to a meeting, I know these numbers. Now the finance guy might present them, but I know them. So let me tell you what happened to us. Back in, in October, we were having a budget meeting and we do as a budget leadership meeting. And I think someone had asked what our, how much we owed on the property and I gave them a number and my finance guy gave another number and I said, okay. And it was it, to me it was it challenged what I knew, but it wasn't just challenging what I knew - it was incorrect information. And so, I sat down, I took it and said, “Okay.” And then I looked up the information and I walked over to him and said, “Now this is what I have in the report you gave me last”, because I also have a semi photographic memory. And then I went and said, I said to him, “Now, is this right or what you said right? Or what you gave me, right?” And he said, “No, what I gave you is right.” I said, “Okay, thank you.” He said, “I'll get up and explain it to the people. I'm sorry, I apologize.” And he had to get up and tell the people that he was wrong and the pastor was right. I understand finances because it is imperative for me. We lead with transparency. My people expect me to understand these numbers and I do. I understand them very well.

Vanessa: You know, for, most theological training, there is a real lack of training in these areas administratively. Either finance, in managing personnel, in even managing conflict. You've picked it up over time. But what about, what do you feel, how do you feel about the new pastor coming in and who might be a smaller church but doesn't have this experience?

Interviewee 1: Yeah, I think that they, there need to be workshops and I think that there are things that we should do to help those churches. I try to make sure that even in the associations that were in, that we offer these opportunities for our smaller churches. We're part of a group called [Ministry Name] and it is, we were, a part of ABCUSA. And we left that, but we, I think that we should do these types of, of workshops so that pastors are equipped. We, you've heard the same stuff and jokes that I've heard. That we learned how to conjugate verbs and we learned how to parse things, but we did not necessarily learn how to administrate and run churches. And if it's not important to you, you won't learn the skill or you won't invest the time. That, this stuff is important to me. I know too many stories, Vanessa, of churches who allow their pastors to kind of run some things because there are some churches that give pastors carte blanche, correct? And so, they made bad financial decisions. I believe in the accountability to the people and accountability to God, but I don't want to make a bad decision so I do research it. I find out what I can. I'm not a whiz but there's a lot that I've learned over time. I can read a report, I know what these numbers are, and I use what I have to my advantage. And when I don't know, I seek out help from someone that that does. And I don't think there's a problem. If I didn't understand the text, I go to a commentary, I go to logos on my computer, and I'll figure it out. I think the same thing is true for leadership. That we can, that if we're going to not just leadership and I'm gonna read John Maxwell's book or I'm gonna do this. But the administrative leadership of the church pastor should have some insight on that. And I don't think it's, it's fair for pastors to say they didn't teach it to me in seminary. I think there should be some classes in seminary or a class that they can do, but I don't think, I think that's a cop out, to be quite honest. If you want to run a church as a business, if you want to run the church and you call yourself the CEO or you're the head, you're the visionary, there's some stuff, either you have to do it or you got to surround yourself with people to, to do it. And what are we talking leadership - that you hired to your, your weaknesses? So that's a weakness then you hire for it, but you also need to know because ultimately as the head, you're gonna be responsibility, you can't claim ignorance. My opinion.

Vanessa: No, I, there's a reason I'm doing my whole DMin on this whole area. So has all of your training been in the nonprofit? Have you ever worked for a for-profit company?

Interviewee 1: I have not. Everything's been for nonprofit. Yeah.

Vanessa: So, are there any areas in administrative management that you find particularly challenging for yourself that you, not that you avoid it, but that you find, just a challenge that you, if you could choose not to do it you would?

Interviewee 1: Yeah, I don't like the HR aspect. I don't, especially in California. I do it because I feel like it's necessary. I find it challenging to keep up with the, the rules. I want to just pay the people and be fair and they be fair to me. That kind of stuff even, you know, in those areas where you have to document stuff and plan for people's termination. I think that's very, very difficult because there's a sci-, there, there really is an art and science of HR that people don't, don't realize and understand, and the people that do it well, do it well. They, they, they, they, they think it, they spat it off, they work through it, and even in the team that I have, I think that what happens is the pastor piece overrides the administrative executive piece and people don't really want to, you know, deal with. I've seen, I've just seen it happen even on my own team that they, you know, they just "love, I just love you, Vanessa, and, you know, and I hate to" as opposed to okay, it's business and there's a way to, and I think that HR is tough. Numbers are numbers. Yeah, I got $5. I spent $4. There's a $1 left. But when it comes to that people, HR, human resource management, it can be tough. It just can be, especially in the church arena.

Vanessa: Are there any other aspects of your job as senior pastor that you find particularly challenging?

Interviewee 1: Administratively?

Vanessa: Or even beyond administratively.

Interviewee 1: You know, I'll be honest with you, Vanessa, the pandemic was tough. Leading in the space you've not been in before and, and being expected to have it. I know a lot of pastors, including myself, we, we're coming out and we're weary. I could use a sabbatical, time to step away. I'm trying to press forward cause I'd rather step away after I finish my paper. But everything keeps impeding on my writing and I'm averaging a funeral a week right now and those people haven't died of Covid. We had some people died of Covid, but it wasn't that. I, just, my church is aging and so I have people who die or you have the unexpected and so, and then even the, the, our church, is a nice size church. And so, in our situation, particularly the, the African American context, they still expect the senior pastor to kind of be intimately involved in several things. And that's hard. I can't answer every text and be at every bedside. And so, I have to send someone else and that can be difficult.

Vanessa: Hmm. Just, you're not alone in the whole Covid exhaustion. I've spoken to many, many pastors who, who, just it thoroughly exhausted them. Some of them, it did them in. I mean, they left the ministry because it was just, it was just too difficult. So, you're not alone in that. If you were going to give advice to a younger pastor, how would you advise them to bridge this, the secular aspects of leadership, that are necessary to your earlier point, with those, kind of, sacred covenantal aspects of being a pastor?

Interviewee 1: Say the question one more time.

Vanessa: If you were going to give advice to a younger pastor, or to any pastor, about how you would bridge the secular aspects of your job, as a pastor, with the

covenantal aspects of your job as a pastor. In other words, you have to hold people accountable yet you're their pastor.

Interviewee 1: Yeah. So, I would say several things. Number one - get a mentor. Get someone you can talk to, someone that's been doing it a while, I think 10, 15 years and they don't have to be at the same place. But someone that's been doing it awhile, they have buried enough experience that can help you. A pastor mentor, but I also would get a business mentor, someone that has been, that, that's leading outside of the church. So, you can hear I have, I have those types of ministry coaches in my life as well. I would encourage them to remember that working at the church is a job, right? Attending the church, working in, in ministry, in one of the ministries is their, is their ministry. A lot of times we think that, and I try to make sure my staff understands this, my, my church secretary or my membership services person, it's a job for which we pay them. We try to encourage them to do other things in the ministry where they feel, whether work in the food bank as a volunteer or do something else, because we tend to blur the lines and we think that because I'm working at the church, I'm working in ministry. That's not necessarily true. And I would encourage staff to see that differently and to understand the differences and for a younger pastor or newer pastor to understand that. And then, to understand that, and this sounds a little bit cut and dry - a business is business. When it comes down to how I have to run the church, that's how I have to run the church. That doesn't mean I don't like you, doesn't mean that I don't care for you, but I have to make some decisions that are in the best interest of the church. And if we're able to kind of keep something separate, knowing that some lines will get blurred, I think that it will work itself out. I would also say make sure you have friends outside the church. And I'm not always great at that, but I do have several friends that are outside of my church because if everything you have is in the church, when one thing is rocked, it makes it very difficult for you as a leader to recover.

Vanessa: Are all of your staff also members of your church?
Interviewee 1: No. I have some staff that are not. My finance person isn't technically a member of the church. And that, that's about it. The rest of our staff tends to be. We didn't have an expectation that if you are working for the church, that you'll be a member of the church. And so, we've had it before where they weren't. I'll be honest, Vanessa, I don't like it. I prefer for people to be members of the church, to be involved in the life of the church, understand the people of the church, and that type of thing. I think it works better.

Vanessa: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to switch gears just a little bit on this next question. As you think about things theologically, are there specific biblical examples of leadership that you yourself draw from? And if there are, could you share those with me?

Interviewee 1: Yeah. So, I am always struck by Paul's leadership. I think that that is major, he is the example of an individual that mentored others and gave them help. All of his writings are really mentorship, right? And so, there's, there's great opportunity there. Old Testament wise, I think that we have to look at the leadership of, of David, of course. I think that as you look at David's life, you gain insight. I particularly, in this season,

fascinated by what David was able to amass and plan for the temple even though he knew he wouldn't build it. I try to help my people. We're in what I call a "Future Now" capital campaign that we have an opportunity to, to prepare the future now. That's what David did. David secured the future now and, and if you go back and read where he talks about my son, Solomon, is inexperienced, alright, he doesn't know a lot, but he'll be able to build this and you need to help him financially. Now, on the other side of David's passing and Solomon's leadership, we know Solomon have been one of the wisest men on earth, right? And so, we see that, but his daddy saw him as inexperienced. I think there's something we learned from that. Even as a leader, there's when David says, "I was young and am now old but never I have seen the righteous forsaken", he talks about the fact that there's, there's a process of maturity that takes place. Solomon had to mature and he matured into wisdom. I think there's, there's something to learn about time, time. They say time heals all wounds, but time grows us, it really does. There is something about longevity and sticking to it. Have there been times, Vanessa, I want to walk away? Yeah. But I preached yesterday about Caleb, and as I was preaching in the preaching moment, I talked about this fact that for 45 years, Caleb held onto the promise that God was going to give him an opportunity to have a piece of land, to have longevity, right? And, and I made the dramatic point that every night Caleb went to bed and said, "It didn't happen today." And every morning he got up and said, "Maybe it'll happen today." And every night he got, the next night, he said, "It didn't happen today." And the next morning, he said, "Maybe it'll happen today." But he never gave up on the fact that God would do it eventually. And in our society now, we expect God to do everything overnight. And we, tomorrow he told me today, he's gonna do it tomorrow. But there's a longevity aspect and I think that's what we learned from a David, from Solomon, and from a Caleb. But, but those are some examples. I can draw a lot. I believe, I just, I believe in the Bible, but I love Paul. Those would be some things I'd give you.

Vanessa: Yeah, I appreciate that. I'm a Paul lover too. So, I really, I mean, don't get me wrong - I love the gospels. I love Jesus' teaching. But I really am fascinated by Paul. In your leadership, with your particular style and execution, have you encountered what you would consider to be any prejudice against your style? Not necessarily because you're an African American pastor, but just prejudice from either within your church or outside of your church, because they did not like your particular style?

Interviewee 1: Yeah, I have. I mean, there we were, our church sits in [County], [City]. We're predominantly African American church. [City] is not African American and in [County], African Americans are 3%. There are people that, that, that mistake our enthusiasm, our joy, and energy for lacking intellectual depth. It's not the case. We are very much so and I'll be honest, we will listen to some of our Caucasian counterparts and we'll say to ourselves, "In our churches, that wouldn't fly. It's not deep enough, it's not, it's not clear enough", those types of things. We feel we have to work harder. We often feel we have to work harder both in the non-black arena and then in the black arena to be, to be good. But I have experienced that, you know, I've been in meetings with, and been the only African American, in the meeting in some denominational meetings and someone gets up and make a joke about, you know, woke culture. And while I don't think I ascribe to "woke culture", it is inflammatory to me because it has come from the

African American experience. And I think that they lack insight that even if I don't assign myself to it, I am defensive of how you might consider others in my community. And I have said to people, especially if I, if I come back hard on the point, please excuse me but I come from a people who have been oppressed over their lifetime. And so, there's some ways we say stuff to each other that can be offensive and we don't pay any attention to it.

Vanessa: Interesting. And so, do you find that you change your response depending on the group if you're in a group?

Interviewee 1: Oh, no, I'm gonna be me. I'm not, I don't, I don't, I don't change up. It's something you know, it's not something that changes you. I just know that when I, so, you know, the group I lead, [Ministry Name], is predominantly caucasian. I serve as chair of the board. I know that when I go in, I need to have my stuff and my ducks in a row, I need to be on, and I'll stay up the night before I make sure my notes are right. All that stuff. So then when people say, "You know, we're really encouraged by your leadership" or, you know, whatever the case may be there, sometimes you hear that and you go, "So what did they think? I didn't, I wouldn't study? I've got an MDiv, a master's degree, a bachelor's, I lead a nice size church." Sometimes you say stuff like that and it makes me feel like you expected me not to be good.

Vanessa: Hmm. Ok.

Interviewee 1: And sometimes I just think that my counterparts don't understand that, what that sounds like.

Vanessa: I can appreciate that as a woman in construction.

Interviewee 1: I'm sure!

Vanessa: I've experienced that myself. Overall, has there been anything that I have not asked you with respect to administration or conflict resolution that, that you would like to just share with me so I don't miss any aspect?

Interviewee 1: I did, I did want to say this. I'm also in, because you got to ask the question and I think I didn't go this far, you ask a question, you know how we, how I, keep up on information and I'm able to learn some things. I'm also part of a pastor mentor group. So, I'm a pastor in a group with other pastors and we have a mentor pastor with us. But we, we, we talk and share with each other. So, if we're having a problem with a staff member or if we're having a problem with implementing the law or volunteers, because one of the things that we've seen, I don't know if you've seen in the churches you consult with, but what we've seen is post-pandemic, our volunteer base has been annihilated.

Vanessa: Yes.

Interviewee 1: People don't, they don't, they're not coming out. So, where you ask somebody and they be like, "Hey, I'm there every Sunday, two services, whatever you

need pastor", now, it's like "Well I can do twice a month, I can do one Sunday a month", and you don't have the same, cause especially when it comes to children's ministry, I mean, from what I've heard, children's ministry and not just my church, lots of churches, are suffering because people got out of the rhythm of the every Sunday and now they decided, "I'm not invested." We talk about those things as pastors. And if I were to tell a younger pastor, that's another, get to be a part of a group. There are, even for, for your, as you do research for pastors, even for executive pastors, there are pastor mentor groups where it's just, it's all we are, are executive pastors and we can talk about, confidentially, what we are seeing in the executive pastor realm. What we don't like that our senior pastor has done or is challenging us to do, or our difficulties sitting second seat, right? Because second seat is a different thing. I've been second seat. It's a different seat because there's a nice balance. You don't want to override your senior pastor. You don't want to threaten any relationships. And then there's the whole aspect of the people. See, one of the things that I'm very aware of in the, in the church, is that the people also playing this stuff. So, I can be the senior pastor but I've heard members say to an executive pastor or an associate pastor, "He really should let you preach more" or "he really...", I mean, those types of things. So, they drop these seeds of discord and I just watch to see how, how, these executive pastors and associate pastors handle that. I act like I didn't hear it. I don't do anything. The only person I may say something to is my wife, but I pay attention to what's going on. I think you have to be in a group that somebody can mentor you and help you with that kind of stuff.

Vanessa: Yes, I couldn't agree more. Pastor, I can't thank you enough actually...

Interviewee 1: No problem

Vanessa: ...for your time today. When I review all of this, I might reach back out for clarification and I hope that would be okay.

Interviewee 1: That would be great, whatever I can do to help you.

Vanessa: I really appreciate that. I'm going to go ahead and close our time also with prayer.

Interviewee 1: Okay.

Vanessa: Will you pray with me?

Interviewee 1: Sure.

Vanessa: Loving creator, I give you thanks for [Pastor Name]. I ask that you continue to bless his ministry, Lord. I ask that you use him as you have in the past, continue in the future, Lord, so that he can reach others for the kingdom of God. It is all of our jobs, Lord, to continue sharing the word that you've given us in scripture out into a really hurt, divided world so that we can bring your love, your care, your mercy, and your

grace to those who so desperately need it. Be with us now as we go about our day and bless our time together. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

Executive Pastor Interview #2

Vanessa: So, before we start, can you just tell me a little bit about your background?

Interviewee 2: Sure. Sure. So, I don't know what, what do you want more educational or just a little personal?

Vanessa: I mean, I'm, part of the question I'm gonna ask you is about your theological training but given that you haven't been in seminary and you're an executive pastor, it's made me even so curious...

Interviewee 2: Okay.

Vanessa: ...about just your background and how you got to your place to be an executive pastor.

Interviewee 2: Right.

Vanessa: In answering that, you can include whatever theological training you may have had along the way. That would be fine.

Interviewee 2: Okay. Well, I, actually, I was not raised in a Christian home and I actually became a Christian in college. So, I was at [University Name], definitely not, not there for any theological training and, but God just really, yeah, put some people around me and I, yeah, I made a decision for Christ after my freshman year. And so just was involved in campus crusade and was discipled by somebody through there. And my, my boyfriend at the time we would, he was from home. We grew up in [City]. He's now my husband. But it was interesting - we both accepted Christ. It was actually the summer after my freshman year, but both accepted Christ the same week, at different spots. So I was with a friend that I had met and we were in [State], and he was at a college briefing, a college conference up at [Retreat Name]. So, so it was kind of at that time where it kind of began my walk with Jesus and really, like I said, was discipled by some amazing people and would come home and attend, that was [Church Name] at the time, which later became [Church Name], but would attend and there when I was back in town and over the summers and did some stuff with the college group. And then yeah, I graduated from college. I was a consultant for my, a leadership consultant for my sorority. So, I was like, yeah, very interesting background. And then from, so that was a year traveling all across the country, representing my sorority, doing leadership training and, and working with our chapters and then came back and worked at the [Corporation Name] doing conventions and catering and hospitality and events and all of that. And at the time, I was volunteering in children's ministry and one of my good friends was the elementary director at [Church Name]. And she was going to have her baby and she said, asked me, if I would consider the job and, and I really had, had no idea what the job was because I

hadn't been raised, you know, in the church. I had always thought I would become a teacher, but my mom had been an elementary teacher for 38 years and did not want me to become a teacher. And so, yeah, she, she just was like, it's a lot of hard work and not a lot of money, which is funny because then I ended up in ministry, which is kind of a lot of work and not a lot of money.

Vanessa: That's funny.

Interviewee 2: But yeah, so, but it was really, again, God just opening these doors and me learning more and more about the work that she did as the elementary director. And it really seemed to be a good fit of my gifts and my experience, experiences. So, I came on church staff as the elementary director and was in charge of you know, kindergarten through, I think it was sixth grade at the time. And so, I found that a lot of my background, you know, interested in education, working with volunteers through my sorority event, and project management all really fit well with, with the role and, and really felt like God, you know, taught me a ton about ministry in the process. So, I did that for several years and, and then really felt like I would go, I really felt like I was gonna be a stay-at-home mom and went through some infertility challenges. And, and so finally got pregnant and about the same time our children's pastor, I think, was, had, had stepped down and I'm trying to remember how it all went, but, and so, they had asked me to be on the search committee. And so, we were on the search committee. I was out there meeting with all these candidates and trying to convince some of the ministry people that I had worked with to consider applying for the job. And, and really, again, God just moved powerfully and I remember I was at a conference at [Church Name], and [Pastor Name] was doing a talk on Malachi and like laying down your own, your own plans and your own needs to, to serve the Lord. And I really felt like God was telling me you need to put your hat, your name in the hat for the job. And my whole thing was, "God, I don't have the qualifications. I am, you know, I am not this, I am not that, I'm not a visionary. I didn't go to seminary." I, you know, all the things this really is never what I thought I would do. And so really out of just pure obedience, I put my name to be considered. And it was kind of interesting at the time, a couple months earlier, maybe, our senior pastor at the time, [Pastor Name], I remember him yelling down the hall at me. This was outside his elementary director and he called me "Jonah" and I was with a friend and I remember who was also on staff and I remember telling her, "I think he's talking to you because he's not talking to me." She's like, "No, I think he's talking to you." And yeah, and so he really felt like I was running from, from what God was calling me to do. And so, it took me a long time to even just put my name to be considered. And I just said, "Okay, I'm just gonna be obedient and putting my name in and that's it and you, y'all can say no." And the committee who had been meeting at that time, I think almost eight months or so, interviewed myself and my husband and, and made the recommendation for me to become the new children's pastor.

Vanessa: Wow.

Interviewee 2: So, yeah, so it was really, yeah, it was really, it was definitely a call, something I did not feel qualified for in the least. And then served at [Church Name] so I

think at that point, maybe it had been four or five years, and then continued to grow with [Church Name] as the children's pastor, the family pastor, they then put the preschool under my leadership as well, as well as the junior high and high school and college ministry at the time. So, at one point, I know, I think I was probably supervising a staff. I had the largest department and was supervising a staff probably of about 50 or 60 almost at that point. So that included all of our child care workers, our preschool staff and directors, the children's junior high, high school, and college staff. So, I was also on the executive management team at [Church Name] and then really kind of felt like God was maybe calling me to something more and then they asked me to step, they were doing a re-org, and asked me to step into the pastor of community life, which was in charge of all of our, our small groups, and routed discipleship program, and men's and women's ministry, and forget, it was like a few other things. So, I stepped into that for about 10 months and just as I was finally settling in and realizing, okay, this is okay, I really missed, I missed working with kids and the volunteers that we had built some deep relationships with. And so, then I, right when I was like, "Okay, God, I think I'm, you know, I think I'm good. I've got my bearing", and then they asked, they had a transition happen and they asked me to step back into family ministry. And so, so, so lead again in family ministry and then when I was still on the management team, and when I left Mariners, a couple of years ago, I had been on staff for 26 years...

Vanessa: Oh, wow.

Interveiwee 2: ...and, and had been asked to kind of step back into the role of children's pastor. And at that point, I just felt like we had a transition in senior pastors and I really felt like, I really felt like I had already done that and didn't and felt like God was calling me to have just a different kingdom impact. And so, had always really felt like I was interested in becoming an executive pastor, but figured it probably wouldn't be at [Church Name] just given the huge scope. And so, a friend of mine had been consulting with [Church Name] and was gonna, was gonna leave to take another position and then they asked me to consider, that she knew I was kinda looking, so applied here and I had worked with the, with [Pastor Name] and, and [Pastor Name]. [Pastor Name] is the senior lead pastor and [Pastor Name] is our senior pastor, and had worked with them at [Church Name] before. So interviewed with them and that was kinda, I think it was 2020, and started here in January. So definitely, yeah, so definitely, sorry, long, long story, but definitely, you know, a new role for me but also, I felt like I had had a lot of experience in management and a lot of the different areas given my experience at [Church Name] and sitting on the executive management team for as long as I had. So yeah, so I've been here for two years.

Vanessa: So, as I'm listening to you speak, I'm looking at my first question. I would, sounds to me, and you can please correct me hearing you incorrectly, that even though you didn't have any formal training, say in the areas of administration or personnel management, any of those, you know, through your school, although I'm not sure, what did you get your degree in?

Interviewee 2: I was a communication study major. So, it did have some, you know, conflict management, I think I had business class, business communications class and conflict, and actually I think there was a class on conflict.
Vanessa: You probably, as most communication majors that I know of, have had training in conflict.

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Vanessa: But it sounds like your, most of your training has been really on the job training.

Interviewee 2: Correct, correct.

Vanessa: And that would be true theologically, would you say too?

Interviewee 2: Yes, yes, definitely. And you know, [Church Name] is nondenominational...

Vanessa: Right.

Interviewee 2: ...and, and, and so they, they're board of elders licensed ministry staff. And so, yeah.

Vanessa: I understand. So, you've been in your role for a couple of years. How would you, Interviewee 2, how would you define an executive, the term "executive pastor"? I'm asking you that because I find that it is used kind of, actually, across different denominations. And so, I would like your position of how you would define...

Interviewee 2: Sure.

Vanessa: ...a word or that term, executive pastor.

Interviewee 2: Sure. Hold on one second. I had made some notes and let me, let me find out quick. I think the, I definitely think the role is different, given, you know, given the denomination, the church, even the senior pastor and I've found, and what their gifts are and what is needed, you know, to kind of round out their leadership team. And so, I find it does differ with different people or different churches. But I really feel like my role is really to implement the vision of the senior pastor. And that would be through our, the management and development of our staff, and, and our department heads who directly report to me, as well as implementing the vision in regards to all areas of our church also pertaining to, you know, ministries, finances, facilities, and our, you know, any other operational needs. So...

Vanessa: So that's a big job.

Interviewee 2: Yeah, that, that's what it looks like here.

Vanessa: Okay, so that kind of leads into my next question. Can you, kind of just gave me an overview of your responsibilities, kind of, if you can, break it down a little bit, you know, this is, it doesn't have to be a lot of detail, but, you know, this is what I have to do every week, this is what I have to do every month or quarterly or however...

Interviewee 2: Sure.

Vanessa: ...responsibilities flow out during the year.

Interviewee 2: Yes. So, I do weekly, we have a teaching meeting where I sit with our teaching team and it's really whoever is teaching that week, that is on Tuesdays, and we go over the message, for the outline of the message, and give feedback, so I'm on that team. Also, I meet once a month, at least with all of our department heads individually in their one-on-one meetings. I'd say weekly, I'm, I'm kind of helping them troubleshoot, addressing issues, you know, that kind of thing. I kind of have an open door and they stop in and we'll talk through different things. I'm also probably, in many cases, the project manager that will, if we have a special project going on, that will take the lead in that particular area in ensuring that other ministries or staff pastors are, you know, know what they're doing and we're making progress there. Currently, we're down a couple of staff people. So, I'm also, you know, we're down three staff people at the moment so my assistant just transitioned, our assistant just transitioned off, our communications directors is gone, and then kind of our experience, we don't have anyone playing the role of experience pastor. So oftentimes, I'm the one just coordinating details of promotional items, announcements, that sort of thing for the, the weekly service. But I'd say a lot of my week is really helping to remove any obstacles, coaching, creating collaboration points for our ministry staff, and meeting weekly with our senior pastor, [Pastor Name], just kind of as a touch base, and I bring to him any issues that are happening, any staffing issues, just making him aware of different things that are, you know, going on in ministries. I think I also try and protect his time so that he can really focus on his teaching for the weekend and preparing his message. And so, we try and yeah, really protect his time so that he can really spend quality time preparing. And then, see, what else?

Vanessa: Can I ask a question? You have, you said that you have monthly one-to-ones with those who report to you.

Interviewee 2: Mhm.

Vanessa: That's a formal meeting where you have a form or anything or is it just a you're just, they get together and you're talking informally?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, it's more informal, I'd say. Yeah. What's happened this month? What do they need? I kind of let them make the agenda. They come in with a list of items they need addressed. And then oftentimes, I might have a few things that I want to talk to them about. I might have a developmental conversation with them, some coaching, or

there may be something that came up in a weekly, my weekly meeting with [Pastor Name]. Sorry, we have a lot of [Name], so it's [Pastor Name] who's the senior lead pastor. So, I might, have some feedback from him or something that he would like to see so then I'm relaying that or talking to the person about that in our one-on-ones.

Vanessa: Got it.

Interviewee 2: So it's more informal.

Vanessa: Okay. So, I'm looking at my next question and you kind of have answered it to a degree, but are you in a position where you have to terminate staff?

Interviewee 2: Yes. Normally that would be, I mean, I guess it was any of the pastors. Yes, or I would come alongside of our, any of our staff people, you know, if it was the children's pastor who had to terminate someone, I might talk them through that or sit with them. We don't have an in-house HR department. We have like, we have outside consultant that helps us with HR. So, yeah, so, but yes, I would be definitely involved in terminations or, you know, or even warnings if there were any employment issues.

Vanessa: Okay. Given you kind of answered my question, but given the litigious nature of California around human resources, everything to do with human resources can be fraught with challenges. So, is that, you address it by using an outside consultant?

Interviewee 2: Yes. Yes. And I would say, you know, given my experience at [Church Name, City], I felt like I had a lot of experience with HR issues, you know, with having such a big staff that I was overseeing and so, yeah, so I'm pretty familiar with, you know, how to handle issues, but at the same time, yeah, I would consult with our HR person, definitely.

Vanessa: Okay. When it comes to resolution, you can't, it's pretty hard to have any group of people and not have conflict occasionally arise. How do you go about managing that? Is that, are you tasked with managing that, first of all? And do you have, I know you have a little bit of conflict resolution training, but how do you go about managing conflict?

Interviewee 2: I, you know, we follow kind of the Matthew 18 policy or guideline. But yeah, I think there have been times where maybe a manager, or two managers, are not getting along or have had some conflict. So usually, it gets brought up by one of my direct reports, kind of filling me in. So, I always encourage them to go back to the person and address it and directly and then if we don't feel like there's, we don't feel like there's resolution there then the three of us would sit down and kind of talk through the issue or I might bring it up to one of the employees just saying, “Hey, this is, I've noticed this, I've seen a pattern of that. You know, I'm concerned for the impact that it's having on your working relationships or, you know, whatever it might be.” So, I just find oftentimes, you know, I feel like I ask a lot of questions also to just make sure, you know, “Hey, is everything okay? This is something I noticed. I feel like this is the perception that is

giving off. Like, what do you think about that?" So, I try and have maybe more of a coaching conversation with somebody if it's something that I notice, or, you know, or bring two people together and kinda have them each kind of share their side, give some insight of what I've seen or other people have experienced, and I think also reminding them of, you know, the goal that we have to work as a staff, you know, usually it's staff people, and the culture that we want to create and, and how sometimes there can be misperceptions or miscommunications that need resolution. So, I find, you know, oftentimes it's just sitting down having personal conversations. I think, oftentimes think, what I'm learning a little bit too, as I think, even with volunteer leaders, I think sometimes our staff can end up relying on email or, you know, or just text message. And I feel like oftentimes that's how some miscommunication happens and so I often will just say, "Pick up the phone or, you know, and set a time to meet face-to-face", or even if it's a volunteer, like, "Have you, have you talked face-to-face?", because I think often times, yeah, we just kinda email back and forth or sense something and I think a lot of times just sitting down with someone definitely can resolve the issue or even, you know, if it's a volunteer or someone in the church who's upset about something, I always tell my staff to pick up the phone and have a conversation, you know, as you don't email that, don't, okay, there's an angry email, don't try and respond over email. Pick up the phone and talk it through. So, so I feel like that's, that's kind of my, my, my way of addressing things.
Vanessa: Have you ever had a situation, Interviewee 2, where you just could not resolve the conflict?

Interviewee 2: Yeah.

Vanessa: Could you share that with me?

Interviewee 2: Yes, I'm trying to think. I think there's been some situations between maybe a volunteer and a leader, maybe, or a staff person and maybe the volunteer didn't like the leader, the staff person's style of leadership or, or even something that they had to, you know, that the staff person had to, had to implement according to our values. And so, I think at that point it's, I'm trying to think of a situation. I know one time there was a gentleman who wanted to teach his own curriculum. And so, you know, we had to have the conversation of, I know you've been doing this for many years, I know you've used your curriculum, you know, it is our goal that all of our teachers would be aligned according to the scope and sequence. So really sharing the value behind the decision that it's, you know, nothing personal but, you know, here's the higher value and this is really what we're striving for. And gosh, I'm so sorry if you feel like, you know, you don't want to do that curriculum, I understand. And we just, sometimes it's just, you know, we might have to agree to disagree on this one. And however, you know, if that's the case, if you're choosing, you know, if you're choosing to continue your curriculum, then we're gonna have to ask you to step down. You know so just being, I think, sharing the value behind a decision, but then also sometimes having to say, "I think maybe it might be best if you take a break or if you step down", or perhaps "this isn't the best place for you to be serving right now or this seems to be a challenge", you know, with you working with so and so or whatever. So, you know, I think in many of the roles that I've been, I've, I've tried to also protect and advocate for our staff because I felt like oftentimes, they are

making decisions based on our church values or based on the wisdom that they have. But I always want to honor a volunteer or a church member to hear them out and hear their concerns. So, we had somebody recently that was unhappy with how we were doing high school ministry. And so, she met with me with a friend, it was a mom and, you know, I listened to them and, and then I also said, "Okay, well, here's why we're doing it the way we're doing it, and this is our belief, this is the research that we've done, and the background that we, you know, background that we have in making this decision. And gosh, we, you know, we love your family, we understand that you want what's best for your, you know, for your child and if you feel like that means, you know, leaving the church and going somewhere else, you know, we trust you to make that, that the best decision for your family, but this is what we're gonna do."

Vanessa: Wow, good for you.

Interviewee 2: So, yeah, so, you know, it's not easy, definitely, but I always feel like sharing the value, sharing the reason behind the decision, and having those face-to-face conversations, are definitely helpful.

Vanessa: It sounds like you're not easily perturbed.

Interviewee 2: You know what, I'm not. I tend to kind of just be a little more even keel and I'm not super emotional, which does help.

Vanessa: Yes.

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Vanessa: Okay. You had mentioned a little earlier a little bit about finances, and to ask you, do you understand the basics of finances? In other words, a balance sheet, I know that you're non-profit, but the profit and loss sheet budgets and all.

Interviewee 2: Yeah. And I'll say that was, that was probably my biggest concern about stepping into this role because I did not feel like I had a ton of experience in that area and so felt like I've done a lot of learning. We have a fractional CFO that I work with who has a ton of experience, which works with a lot of other churches, and I know her very well, so, so she's been great if kind of giving me also, you know, just talking through things or if I have questions, yes. But I've learned how to, how to do all of that. I'm also in charge of overseeing that for you know, to report, to be able to report back to our senior pastor as well as our board of elders. So, but she, our CFO, was the one that kind of we talked through, she prepares a monthly dashboard that we talk through every, every month. Every week I'm checking the giving trends. I oversee that, our kind of generosity campaign and how we communicate with our givers, our quarterly, quarterly statement letters that we give, our year-end giving campaign, and then our, our fiscal year in. So, I'm definitely involved in all of that, but, and then helping are helping our church to, helping our, our senior pastor to communicate to our givers and donors as well.

Vanessa: Okay. So those, those three areas - you carry a lot on your shoulders. So, you're managing staff and personnel, which is a big area just in itself, you get involved in conflict resolution, which is can be depending on the nature of the big area, and you're responsible for some financial management. So, across those three areas, is there one or the other that you particularly find challenging?

Interviewee 2: I think, I know, it depends on how I guess how we would define challenging. I felt like the...

Vanessa: That's fine. How would you define that?

Interviewee 2: ...I know. The challenging, I think emotionally would probably be like the conflict resolution and some of the personnel things. You know, I love people. I have a tendency to, to, to see both sides. I'm analytical so, like, I think a lot in my mind and analyze a lot of the conversations or everything that's going on. And so, I feel like, you know, emotionally challenging or mentally challenging oftentimes is yeah, some of the personnel issues or conflict management. That just weighs heavy on my, you know, on myself. And I think I'm also always conscious of, yeah, of how we treat people, the culture that we're creating, and, and representing Christ and how we handle those issues. And so, yeah, so I'd say mentally and emotionally challenging would be those. I think challenging in regards to having less experience or knowledge would be the financial, financial areas, just because that's not my first go to. And yeah, and there's times where, you know, yes, can I understand a balance sheet or dashboard, profit and loss? Yes. And so, we've been super fortunate in that we've been in a great position and I also have great people around me that, you know, that can help, but that's definitely an area that I don't feel as knowledgeable about. And so, yeah.

Vanessa: Okay.

Interviewee 2: So that's challenging in that regard.

Vanssa: So, the pastor's job, particularly, I think in the executive pastor's job, can be challenging as you're managing kind of secular aspects of just managing people and finances, kind of sacred covenantal aspects of the fact that you're doing it within the church environment as a pastor. So how do you, how do you balance those? How do you bridge those two aspects of the secular and sacred?

Interviewee 2: I know. Yeah, I think, I mean, obviously a lot of prayer. Yeah, I think that, I don't know, maybe it's also coming from a larger church like [Church Name]. I feel like what I saw modeled was a definite, there is this corporate side of ministry and of church. So, I feel like how I saw, how I saw that modeled and my experience even like working at the [Corporation Name] and all of those things, I prefer, you know, having some of that structure, having some of that corporate feel because I feel like it's a little bit easier to, to hold people accountable to, to have clarity in regards to, you know, policies or procedures and time, timelines and all of that. So, I think there's kind of a natural bent that I have that's probably more administrative and a little bit more corporate. So, I do

feel like I feel like that helps me in my role. I don't always get it right but, but I feel like in order to, yeah, for communication to work well, for, for people to know expectations and even just how we calendar events, you know, things like that, there's a process for things. And so, I feel like having a clear process helps people to be able to be successful. I think at the same time, the ministry side of really loving people and not putting the process before the people in the ministry is, is important. And sometimes that's hard, sometimes it's really hard. But I feel like even with employees of having to hold people accountable to a, to a job, helps if you have a process, helps if you have a job description, things like that. And so, I feel like, and how we relate and respect one another you know, is definitely important in regards to our ministry. But then I feel like it's also okay to hold people accountable and to expect things from them, to give feedback and coaching, have a clear process. So, yeah, I think it's a delicate balance definitely, and I feel like, you know, also seeking the Lord in the decisions that I make is super important. I feel like sometimes maybe people get could get frustrated because I am a little bit more analytical. I take time to kind of process through, in my mind and pray through what I feel like is the next best step or action that we need to take. And, and sometimes it might just even be, might not make sense on paper, but it might just be listening to Holy Spirit of saying okay, I'm gonna, you know, I'm gonna whatever take a chance on this person or give them a second chance or whatever it might be, or even, hey, we're gonna cancel this meeting because we really need to spend some time in prayer for Easter, whatever it might be. So, yeah, I feel like there's a definite balance but obviously trying to seek the Lord in all that we do and in reminding people of why we're here I think is so critical. I think it's easy to get caught up in ministry. I think, especially, you know, working at [Church Name]. It was a fast pace, definitely high level of excellence. We did a story time that we called, called it Every Tuesday Morning, and now we've actually implemented that back at [Church Name], but it's a time for our staff to just share stories of how God is at work. It might be in our ministry, it could be personally, but what I love about that is that, that's how we start our week. We take Mondays off or the staff, most of staff takes Monday off. And so, we start Tuesday morning, just sharing stories of how God has, has been working or something we've noticed, or a story of God's faithfulness or healing or whatever it might be. And I have found that has been so incredible for our staff. I feel like it really reminds us of why what we do is important, reminds us of the values that we hold us as staff and, and really gives us a picture of how God is moving, even in other ministries or in ways that sometimes we don't see. And I feel like it keeps it, it keeps the Lord forefront in our ministry week and as we prepare, you know, throughout the week, just being reminded of how God's working.

Vanessa: So, along those same lines, you have a lot of years of experience and so you come to your job pretty well-equipped, I would say. But if you had to give one piece of advice to someone new just starting in ministry, maybe even someone tasked as a solo pastor and it's his or her first job in ministry and maybe they've come in with just theological training and not background that you have, is there one piece of advice that you would give them to help them manage through those secular and sacred, sacred and secular tasks?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, I think it's important to have great people around you and whether that is mentors, a networking group, other volunteer leaders that might be laypeople but have business experience, you know, or, or fellow staff members that you can be honest with, that you can be vulnerable and transparent with, and that might not be, you know, all of your staff people. But I think, gosh, I feel like there's been so many times in my ministry career where having that extra person or people that I could call and talk through an issue with or, you know, even just a personal thing of like, I'm really struggling with this. You know, someone outside of my church maybe. I know like for the long, for a while, there was a gal, I don't know if you're familiar with [Person Name]. She was at [University Name] and also at [Church Name], kind of in an executive role. But she was someone that I could just call and talk through an issue with, or ask her opinion or wisdom on and, and she was outside of my church but kind of knew, you know, knew [Church Name], knew me, and really give me some sound advice. And so, I feel like I have numerous people that I can think of that that have been huge ministry advocates and wise counsel for me. And so, I think sometimes I've seen ministry professionals or pastors try and feel like they have to do it all by themselves. I think I've definitely fallen into that trap before. I really feel like God, I ended up having, we had our first born and then about four years later doing infertility, got pregnant with triplets.

Vanessa: Oh my goodness!

Interviewee 2: Yes. So that was right before, right in the midst, right before we were going into our big building campaign and building a multi-million dollar children's building that I had planned, I had, you know, kind of done all the plans with the architect and a team and, and I really, so it wasn't in so many ways, I felt like it was not a good time and it was definitely not my plan. I thought I was just going to have one and be able to continue on, you know, as everything was being normal. And it really felt like God taught me during that time of just how to let go and how to, again, surround myself with gifted people and that I could rely on, that I could count on to, to handle different areas of the ministry. And I felt like in many ways He kind of had to pry my hands open and off of different things so that I could, you know, take the rest and the time that I needed with my babies and with my pregnancy. But I felt like He taught me a lot about not feeling like I had to do it all myself and really being able to depend on other people. And there was, we, at the, there were some incredible people that God brought onto my team, onto like our advisory team at the time, that we had volunteers. Yeah, and I feel like oftentimes ministry, people think they have to do it all and they think that that's what makes them feel or look successful to their supervisor, or to their elders, or whatever. And so just the other day, I was telling our youth team, I've been encouraging them to use more parent volunteers. And so, they were doing camp registration and I have, since I've been here, I'm like, "You should get a team of parents that could just handle the whole check in process, loading the busses, all of that." And they finally got a team to do that. And it was so funny because they, they were just looking around and the, our junior high pastor and our, we have another leadership director, and they actually were like, "We feel bad because we're not doing anything." And I said, "That's what I want you to be doing because you're now available to talk to parents, to talk to the new kid that's never been away from home to, you know, to troubleshoot, to, you know, to talk to the kids." And

yes, I often think that we feel like our value and our, our worth as ministry people is if we do it ourselves and yet, when we can equip the body of Christ and they all can get to use their gifts to serve, that's what we're really called to do. So, I love to remind our staff that all the time.

Vanessa: I'm gonna switch gears.

Interviewee 2: Sure.

Vanessa: Just have a couple more questions.

Interviewee 2: Sure.

Vanessa: But I want you to think more theologically or biblically. Are there specific biblical examples of leadership in scriptures that you draw from or that you find helpful with your job?

Interviewee 2: Yes, Yeah. I mean, we've definitely, I've done, you know, through the years, different studies, you know, on David, Esther, Nehemiah, which have all been so helpful. Think Nehemiah definitely. I think when we're, you know, we've been talking about conflict management - sorry, I was looking for my notes here. You know, I feel like definitely Matthew 18, and then I think in Romans, "As far as it depends on me, be at peace with your brothers." I feel like that's a huge one. I feel like maybe earlier in my ministry years, it was easier to just be like, "Oh, that's gonna work itself out," or "I don't know why that person is upset," and I feel like it's, you know, that verse in particular, has really encouraged me in my leadership to lean in and just step into difficult conversations or things that I notice instead of letting, letting them fester and bringing up the, sometimes the, having the uncomfortable conversation. And so, yeah, I feel like that God's kind of, that's one that always tends to, God uses to remind me to lean in on this conversation.

Vanessa: Yes. Poor Paul. I mean, I had to deal with a lot of conflict in his.
Interviewee 2: Yes. Right.

Vanessa: You give a great example for that.

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Vanessa: Okay, thank you for that. This last question sometimes can be a little touchy so I hope that it doesn't, isn't triggering in any way. But I wanted to ask you if you feel that you have encountered any prejudice in your time in ministry, either with your leadership style or your execution or anything related to the fact of your race, your gender, or anything along those lines.

Interviewee 2: I wouldn't say there's anything major. I think I have experienced some situations. I think when I was first named the children's pastor, I know that a few families

had, had an issue, probably one with me being a woman. I think another one, I think a few families had, had an issue that I know of because I didn't have theological training. I know that because they later came up and apologize and confessed and asked for forgiveness. I didn't know it at the time but, but yeah, even many years later saying, “I, I, I'm sorry, I misjudged you, I'm so grateful, you know, for clearly”, I mean, it was really, it was really special, but they came back and said “clearly, you know, you were the person that was supposed to be in the job, you've done an incredible job, and I misjudged you or, you know, wasn't fair in my judgment of you.” So, I know that there were some issues with families there. I was super grateful in the fact that I, being at [Church Name], they really believe, [Pastor Name] was very much an advocate for women in ministry. And so, I always felt very supported in that regard. He, you know, he used to say there are a few of us and he's like, he's like, “I mean, look at our power players, you know, they are all women.” And so, he was very much an advocate, as is our senior pastor now, for women in leadership. And I think what we brought to the table and, yeah, and the gifts that I had. I think sometimes I did feel, I don't know that it was, it wasn't regarding being a woman, but I felt like I was able to be on stage and I did not want to teach. So that was when it was not an issue, but I had plenty of visibility and opportunity, you know, to do announcements and to, you know, speak on behalf of our pastors, all of that. But I think one of the prejudices maybe that I felt was, I think sometimes, maybe even being at a bigger church, I think oftentimes someone that, or the personality maybe, or maybe it was just our church, but I think sometimes, someone who's really outspoken and verbose and yeah, really charismatic, you know, kind of that first impression. I feel like sometimes that was kind of the expectation of what a pastor at a certain level had to look like. And maybe part of that might have been to my own insecurities because I felt like that wasn't necessarily me. Like I said, I was more analytical, more operationally minded.

Vanessa: So, what did you, how did you deal with that?

Interviewee 2: I think I had some conversations with some people, you know, I spoke to [Pastor Name] about it a couple times. I remember at one point, somebody got promoted to the executive management team and I really felt like I kind of had a question as to the timing of that and why, you know, why that person and not me. And so, I addressed, addressed it with the executive pastor at the time and I just said, here's, you know, here's what I felt like I would bring to the table, here's the ministries I'm representing and why that would viewpoint would be important, and, and actually, then I got promoted a few months later and the executive pastor at the time was like, “I'm so glad that you came and said something. I do feel like, you know, you definitely bring something to the table. You have, you bring a different perspective.” Yeah. And so, I think sometimes just the, yeah, I think sometimes maybe people, and again, maybe this was just [Church Name], I think people's first glance at somebody you know, that had a lot of charisma, was kind of loud, louder, and kind of, you know, kinda hold the room with their big personality was valued maybe more so than maybe what some other people brought to the table. But so, I felt like having some good conversations, helping people to realize the gifts that I had, and how I wanted to contribute. And we had great conversations too about, you know, we worked with some different consultants over the years just learning our style. So, we did

Burkman, we did Strength Finders, we did, oh, gosh, one other thing. So those really helped us to understand our working styles and personalities and leadership styles.

Vanessa: Kind of like a Myers Briggs.

Interviewee 2: Yeah. I'm trying to remember what the, you know, what the other thing is, we have like these little blocks that would be on everybody's desk. I'm trying remember where I was.

Vanessa: I think that's wonderful, by the way because I think when you understand your style and understanding someone else's style, it can really help both in managing that person and understanding when conflict arises.

Interviewee 2: Right? Definitely. And I think for them to understand too, be a part of my cultural background, part of my makeup. You know, we aren't the first like in, in the Asian culture, you don't speak back to your elders or your supervisors, you aren't the first to talk. Some things like that, you know, if, if asked will answer. But even like with an analytical person, they aren't gonna be the first one to blurt out an answer. And so, for, I think for, sometimes from my supervisors or for, you know, [Pastor Name] and our executive pastor to understand some of my, my personality and my leadership style helped them to recognize, "Oh, okay, she does have an opinion. She might not, you know, speak that first." Yeah. So, I think for me to also feel comfortable to and what, you know, the gifts that God has given me and my style also helped me to be more confident and speaking up for advocating for myself or whatever it might be.

Vanessa: Right. I have, I don't have any other questions, but was there anything that you wanted to add that I perhaps did not ask?

Interviewee 2: Let's see. Do, oh, I think the only other thing like with the rule, I think you said something about the challenging part of our job, I think specifically for executive pastors, or maybe someone in a similar role, that I think it's the idea of like leading from the second chair or leading when you're not in charge. I think that's a unique part of my job as executive pastor that I'm even learning more about as time goes on. And I think as if someone in ministry for as long as I was, and having had several different executive pastors that I worked with through my 26 years at [Church Name], I don't think I truly understand, understood the role of the executive pastor until I've sat in the, you know, sat in this role. So, I do think it's unique and again, it might be unique, you know, according to who the senior pastor is. But, but yeah, I think they have an interesting role of oftentimes managing the staff, but then also speaking on behalf of the senior pastor with, but at the same time, trying not to say, you know, trying, trying to have your own authority and not having to rely on your senior pastor's authority or, you know, just saying, "Well, they want it this way", or "This is how someone's, you know, how he's asked me to do it." So, I think that's an interesting challenge, particularly for the role of executive pastor.

Vanessa: Just, it's interesting, you should say that because that's the second time I've heard that very exact...

Interviewee 2: Oh really! Good.
Vanessa: ...yes, comment.

Interviewee 2: Yeah. It's been one of the things where most recently I've been, I've even had some conversations. Yes. Yes. I've had some conversations with my, our senior pastor and, yeah, and even, it's made me kind of feel like, okay, I might need to get, you know, some networking with some other executive pastors going on just, you know, to, to continue to learn in that area because it's different. It's different than I thought.

Vanessa: That's right. I want to thank you so much.

Interviewee 2: Sure.

Executive Pastor Interview #3

Vanessa: Just a couple of things before I get to the actual questions. You were with [Church Name]. Do I have that right?

Interviewee 3: Most recently. Yes.

Vanessa: Recently with [Church Name] and what was your exact title with [Church Name]?

Interviewee 3: Executive Pastor of Ministries.

Vanessa: And I know they're enormous.

Interviewee 3: Right.

Vanessa: Do you have just a general idea of how enormous?

Interviewee 3: Gosh. Our, man that's so funny. I've been on sabbatical for five months. Weekend attendance, I think, was still in the like 10,000 range, seven campuses, obviously much lower than previous years, pre-Covid. Well, and the crisis there started in 2018 and then was it was a double whammy with COVID.

Vanessa: Yeah. And how many reported to you or, or were you responsible for?

Interviewee 3: Gosh. My direct reports were about nine. The teams under me, you know, probably 150.

Vanessa: Oh, wow, that is a lot. Okay. Alright, good. That's just kind of a little basic information that I needed to gather just to confirm what I thought I knew, but I just wanted to be sure. Where did you get your theological training?

Interviewee 3: Gosh. So, I reviewed your questions last night and this morning, and it's really, it's been interesting to review my own story, but I have no formal theological training.

Vanessa: Don't feel bad. You're the second one that I've interviewed, exact same situation.

Interviewee 3: That's, yeah, it's amazing. It's been completely God's favor and, and obedience to God. I had a career in telecommunications for almost a decade and then 19

years now in full-time ministry, but it was all out of obedience, saying “Yes” to the next door that God opened. Never with an intent to end up where I did.

Vanessa: Okay. Have you had any formal training? When I say formal training, I don't mean workshops, I mean, actual school, you know, in areas of administration with like personnel conflict, finances, those types of things.

Interviewee 3: No, actually, I have no formal education at all. I was just God-blessed with an amazing career in telecommunications without any college. And really, I would say, got my master's in business kind of there, but like on the job and then masters in leadership and ministry probably in, I would say, mostly at the time I spent at [Church Name]. I was on staff at [Church Name] in senior leadership for almost 13 years.

Vanessa: Oh, and when was that?

Interviewee 3: Gosh, I started in, so my career started at the [Church Name] in 2004 and then was their first executive pastor, smaller church about 3000. Then went on staff at [Church Name] in 2007 and officially wrapped up completely, probably in 2020. There were multiple different assignments in that time and then from that went to [Church Name].

Vanessa: Wow. Do you happen to know [Person Name]?

Interviewee 3: Oh my gosh, I know her exceptionally well. In fact, she was the person I, gosh, had recruited hard, but for my replacement as the executive pastor at [Church Name]. So how do you know her?

Vanessa: I interviewed her.

Interviewee 3: Oh, you're kidding me. I love that.

Vanessa: Is that not a small world? I mean...

Interviewee 3: That's crazy. I absolutely love her. She's one of my favorite of all leaders.

Vanessa: Yeah. She was, she was impressive. Very impressive. [Interviewee], how would you define that term “executive pastor”?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, I think for me, my definition of it has centered around being a shepherd leader, one who has the business acumen and administrative gifts equally balanced with the shepherd and disciple maker who helps manage the growing complexity of any, you know, ministry or team as it grows and requires more skills than potentially the senior pastor or senior leader of that team has.

Vanessa: And as, in your role as executive pastor, could you give me kind of, going from a little more granular to a little more broad, overview of what that looked like for

you, either daily, weekly, monthly, even annually. How did you go about executing your job?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, actually, I'd like to start on the annual and kind of top down because I think in kind of a macro strategic way and I think it starts with on an annual basis, reevaluating the clarity around mission, vision values, and then ensuring that the operating practices continuously align with those so that they're executed well and then every year, knowing specifically based on the current climate landscape, challenges that you're facing, personnel, budget, all of those factors, like what are the top, you know, three to five initiatives you need to focus on, make that super clear and tangible for your teams and then tie that to their day-to-day operations. So that looks like strategic ministry planning. I implemented something at [Church Name], actually several churches now, I call it roadmap. I kind of adopted that from technology product development, but a roadmap calendar. Churches tend to operate and think around events because it's a very attractional way of getting people in so to plan a lot of events without tying it to the mission vision values and making sure that the event itself within the overarching roadmap is manageable, scalable, that we have the right resources, that we're not overloading people with invitations. And so doing an annual roadmap planning and then from there, it breaks down very easily into like a quarterly, monthly, weekly work rhythm. And so, tying, so my role in that was planning that whole process and then breaking that down into our quarterly-like spike events for staff that would bring the mission and the vision before them again, tying it to strategic monthly staff meetings so that was always, you know, the important things were in front of people, keeping them inspired but also aligned. And then that broke itself down into, then my teams, into every week I had regular one-on-ones with all of my direct reports and then I also knew what their workflow rhythms were and how they were tying the big, you know, mission, vision, values, and strategic initiatives into their own workflow. And so that kind of system helped me manage momentum and create alignment.

Vanessa: Okay. So, three things popped into my mind as you were speaking. This annual re-evaluation and alignment that you do. Is this something that you do with the senior management or is this something that you're doing by yourself?

Interviewee 3: That's a great question. It started, I created it, this kind of a system based on managing my team when I started at [Church Name] for, I was leading outreach, local and global, had a 4 million dollar budget, you know, gosh, 30, 40 staff members, 600 volunteers. And so that kind of clarity and alignment was super important for us. And we had a little bit more autonomy because we, again, we're separately funded from the overall church. But what this was this huge learning opportunity for me was realizing we were operating well as an independent organization outreach, local and global, but not fully aligned with our senior pastor so we weren't getting as much executive support per se as, as we needed, which translated into all kinds of things you can imagine - not getting up front time, not being highlighted, things like that. And so, I created a kind of a model or framework to reevaluate mission, vision, values and like strategic alignment. That was in 2008-09, and I've since reused that at the most senior levels. And so, most of my assignments have been around change management or turn around, which almost

always started with a misalignment at the highest level, either with your board or with the senior pastor or from the senior pastor to his senior team or disconnect from that team to the next level down. So, it's varied in each scenario. But, yeah.
Vanessa: You also mentioned that you take these maybe bigger macro ideas and make them into more tangible, smaller units. How do you do that?

Interviewee 3: Gosh. It's kind of fun. I think when I look back now, I think, at least I'm not sure your experience with capital campaigns or vision campaigns, it's very similar to, to that where it's like you take like in this last scenario, it's like we're trying to turn [Church Name] around which, you know, the highest level is just a massive, daunting task and there's multiple, you know, levels and layers to the complexity of that. And so, trying to realign and create momentum with the staff that is wounded, traumatized, distrustful of new leadership, it was like, gosh, we really need to create a vision campaign and do it in such a way that it's not just operational, but it's highly relational and it's sensitive to the climate that we're in. And so being able to name that for everyone, call it out, not being afraid of the reality that we were facing and then going "and we still have to move forward." And so, working, what I did was worked with the senior pastor, the board as well, and our senior executive team, and then the broader executive team to build language around our challenge, how we were invested in moving forward, and then ultimately, it got really tactical and a rebranding where we would rebrand [Church Name], we updated all of our values, so then walked the team through a process to redefine, ultimately, was mission, vision, values and the [Church Name] brand. And so that's how I became really tactical, but it started with, and I obviously would be remiss to not name the spiritual journey of it that this is, you know, God's church and God's Kingdom and he's gonna make a way and he's doing a new thing and it's not gonna be easy. So, there was a lot of, for lack of a better word, discipleship of our most senior leaders, like kind of through that process, which this most recent one was the most challenging because at our executive level, we had leaders, because they rebuilt the whole team, from 14 different churches and context. And so, it started with the first challenge we have to face together is building a language where we are all meaning the same thing when we use the same words because they all meant something different. And so that's just a practical example of what it looked like most recently.

Vanessa: When you, I'm going a little more even more granular now, your one-to-ones with your staff, you mentioned that you do that, I think you said weekly. Do you, is it a formal process? Do you have a form that you use, or is it more informal where that they come in and you just sit down and chat about whatever their goal assignment might have been or whatever their roadblocks might be, or etcetera?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, kind of both/and. At [Church Name], we had an app, it was called 15-5. And then we adopted a new one, right when I was leaving, it's called leader LEADR. That was a technology platform to document those things. Prior to that, I hadn't used anything super formal other than a system that I use. One, I'm a note taker so I have a journal that, and I've used this system for 30 years which is kind of crazy, where I learn by writing like that and help like integrate. And so, I always write everything down. Key points we talked about, agreements we made, action items, next steps, like that's my

rhythm. And so, every time I meet with someone, it always starts with personal – “How are you doing?”, “How's your family?”, if they, they have one. What are the things that we've already previously agreed on personally that you're focused on in this season for growth? How are those things moving along? And I have my notes from last time. So, I prepare by going back to the next and pulling it up and refreshing. And so, it's personal first, then, then more team oriented – “How's your team?”, “How and what are your challenges there?”, and then the last thing, super practical, are “What are the roadblocks obstacles?” My job, in that sense, is always to be the one to block and tackle, to remove whatever barriers are holding them back and make sure that they have what they need to succeed. And so, it's focused on that, gets really tactical, and then I move on those things immediately. And so, it creates this rolling, hopefully forward momentum.

Vanessa: So, what do you do or what have you done, maybe that's a better way of framing the question, when you have a staff member or direct report who is consistently not meeting the, or achieving, the goals and/or vision of the church.

Interviewee 3: Yeah, that's always a hard one. Its first off, lots of prayer, because it takes a lot of discernment to try to get to the root cause of what's preventing the forward momentum, whether that's personal skill set issue, a personality challenge, or a lack of understanding, or a lack of skills. So, a lot of prayer around discernment for that. And then in my experience, the best thing is just really direct feedback and honest evaluation. And so, and this gets into some of the conflict resolution, you, some of your questions got to and then some of the later questions, but I'm an eight on the Enneagram. So that was super helpful to learn, for me, that I'm a challenger and I love to get to the root of a problem and I'm not scared or threatened by it, even if it's a barrier obstacle in my own personality or the way I work. And it was helpful for me to realize not everyone loves that and so it's be able to create a safe environment where it's neutral and that it's not, the growth is always good, and to know that you have to get to the things that are holding us back. And so really work hard to create a safe environment so, and an honest one so when we get to an impasse where it's like this isn't working, it's a mutual discovery and a mutual agreement of that and I've had to be the one to let multiple people go over the years and it's never easy. It's never fun. But with, gosh, I'm trying to think if there's any exceptions where it's, I believe that if someone's not in the right position, it's hurting them as much as it's hurting the organization, and to have an honoring process to help them discover that is, can be a great stepping stone for them as well as the organization. And I've seen that work really well.

Vanessa: You mentioned Enneagram. Do, does your church use any consistent type of personality tests so that each of you know what your personality type might be and what your strengths and weaknesses might be, particularly under stress.

Interviewee 3: Yes. [Church Name] was one of the forerunners with Enneagram usage and, and so that was really baked into the culture there. I think that it's, [Church Name] used more of the corporate like Myers Briggs and it was one more that we did I forget was the colors, the red, yellow, blue, the blocks. And there's so many different things. I think the key thing is having one that creates a common language and some really

practical tools to help you understand where you go in stress and then what the implications are on a team, not just an individual. And so, I've seen it, when I've seen it work the best is when it's not just like some cubes on your desk, but when it integrates into how we work, and I think [Church Name] did that really well with the Enneagram.

Vanessa: Did you use their consultants when you did that?

Interviewee 3: I am not sure. That was predated me at [Church Name]. We had some internal consultants at [Church Name] that were trained in Myers Briggs. Trying to think so, I don't know, I'm sure [Church Name] did at some point because they were always about bringing in the experts on whatever the thing was.

Vanessa: Well, and there's many books and Enneagram has several books, particularly even for churches, so...
Interviewee 3: Yeah.

Vanessa: ...alright, great. Switching gears, a little bit. Now I know you haven't had any formal training, but have you taken any workshops or seminars in the area of either personnel, which would include hiring, delegating, and termination, in the area of conflict resolution, and financial management.

Interviewee 3: Yeah, so with the personal management piece, what was super beneficial for me when I came, when I started at [Church Name], my hire was a gosh, an important, not me specifically, the position was a really important one in a succession plan for [Church Name] because [Person Name], the founding pastor of outreach, was the senior pastor's wife. So, I had this high-level volunteer managing that, my hire, and onboarding. And she happened to be at the time, the HR director or VP for [Corporation Name] and she brought in, so the hiring process I went through was extensive, it was scientific, as well as spiritual components. And I was mesmerized by it and asked her kind of to give me the lowdown when I, after I started, and it was based on the Lominger Assets and so built a, I just was blessed to have her as a mentor coach in that. And so, I designed our system for all of hiring, feedback, that kind of thing, around that whole system, which created just an awesome baseline for us as a whole team.

Vanessa: That's incredible. Alright. So that's great for HR. How about conflict resolution?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, unfortunately, that one, I would say I learned by seeing it go horribly wrong.

Vanessa: You and most people, unfortunately,

Interviewee 3: Right?

Interviewee 3: And I think one thing I would say when I first went into ministry, I felt very unqualified and there was a lot of appropriate reverence for the position. And I was

having come from the wireless industry at the time, was very competitive, very bottom line driven, and very high speed, in terms of pace, we were, you know, installing at the time I was on project management for the Los Angeles network changeover, I mean, the million dollar-a-day penalties. And so, there was no room for a lack of, an unwillingness to address conflict because so much was at stake. And so, it was surprising to me is to come into ministry and the church and go "the stakes are even higher." We have a great example and model for how to love each other and, you know, have differing opinions and yet we are like, not good at it at all, like what's that about? And so, it became something that I would, plus I'm an 8, was really passionate about and had a lot of opportunities in outreach to learn how to do it well. And I say that with a lot of humility, I hope. When I first stepped into outreach, it was kind of crumbling, particularly on the global side, and what I realized you've got a lot of high-capacity volunteers that are passionate about their ministry in Uganda or Africa or whatever and the church isn't supporting them or aligning with them the way they think they should and it created a lot of blowups. It was really actually tragic. And so, we had some volunteer, head capacity volunteer leaders, either launch a nonprofit and maybe that was exactly what God intended or wanted, or leave the church, or take people with them. And so, I had to figure out, "Okay, how do we bring people together, neutralize our opinions and our passions and be willing to create a third way." I say a third way. I know that's used a lot late, but assume that everyone sees something accurately from their vantage point and all of us see something inaccurately from our vantage point and that the whole picture is, the only way to get that, is to bring everyone's perspectives together. And so, to first and foremost, create a neutral zone and also an awareness that this is a spiritual transaction and that there's a lot of, at stake, and we know we have an enemy and so just creating that spiritual awareness of what's at stake and then creating some ground rules about how we're going to navigate and how we're gonna operate this together. And at one point with my transition, and I use this as an example or as a tool, and when [Person Name] and I were transitioning, we created rules of engagement as to how we would operate if and when things got tense. And so being able to take that and apply it to individual scenarios that had already gotten tense and kind of like calming everyone down, became something that actually crazily started to really enjoy because you could see people go like, "Oh wow, it's OK to disagree. And yet we've got to find a way forward and if we can't move forward together, we can agree to go different ways in a way that's honoring to each other and to God", and that's been something that I've been proud of.

Vanessa: Yeah, it's interesting you say that because we do something similar in my business, and we call it the adult contract.

Interviewee 3: That's great.

Vanessa: And we have to remind our staff and managers every, every time we have any type of meeting that we know might create disagreement about the adult contract. And we ask permission to remind them that perhaps they're walking outside the balance of that adult contract.

Interviewee 3: That's great.

Vanessa: So, you mentioned volunteers and staff. When it comes to this conflict resolution, sounds like you're pretty skilled at it. Do you find that staff, perhaps, is easier to manage because their staff versus volunteers?

Interviewee 3: Gosh, that's a great question. And I've heard it often said that they are because they're paid and whereas volunteers are not. And I think that's a misnomer. I think that it's about trust and buy-in and that if you can establish that it doesn't matter. I mean, if you ultimately, when you think about it, the whole mission of the Kingdom is a volunteer basis, so being able to get that, that buy-in and manage and steward it well and should be able to overcome that perception.

Vanessa: Okay. Moving into financial management - have you had any workshops or training? Not, not classroom training, necessarily, or mentoring perhaps in understanding the basics of finance, a balance sheet, a profit and loss statement, budgets, that type of thing.

Interviewee 3: No, and I just have that's an area when I reflect on my career that I just was blessed with an instinctive understanding. My last position in telecommunications was forecasting revenue and 650 million dollars a year for the, at the time, [Corporation Name] wireless account and I created a system. So that's just something, the way my brain works. And also great at projecting, analytics, being able to apply that like to real time. And so that was actually really surprising and fun to be able to see how does that apply in the ministry context given that I feel really passionate about the fact that we are called to steward and manage everything really well. And so, helping maybe some pastors that that's not maybe a natural inclination or not a passion, helping them understand the significance and the importance and therefore how to why to apply some extra effort in that area so we can continue to grow and move forward.

Vanessa: Were you good at math in school?

Interviewee 3: Yes. Yeah.

Vanessa: Would you describe yourself as being very detail oriented?

Interviewee 3: Yes and no. Like, I'm an interesting, I have a both/and. I don't love all the detail but I love, I'm actually more of a creative with the analytical capacity, but I love to problem solve and I create, I naturally create systems. And so that's where, and I think my project management experience helped me understand the importance of the details, doing wireless networks, and so if I can discipline myself, and this is something that I've coached a lot of my staff on as well, like knowing where you're weaker or maybe you don't have a natural inclination or passion, you don't have to try to overcome or necessarily fix. It's like how do you compensate for that? And so, for me, being able to manage the details creates capacity and margin for me to then focus on problem solving, which is what I really enjoy.

Vanessa: Okay. In those three areas - personnel management, conflict resolution, and financial management, is there one of those three areas that you find particularly challenging? And can you tell me why that is so?

Interviewee 3: I think probably the personnel management in the sense of the, specifically hiring, training, delegating, monitoring, terminating. It's more draining. I love to work with really high-capacity leaders that are more self-managers so that we can then tackle the really big, audacious goals together. I'll, I absolutely will do those things and I'm competent at it, but it is more yeah, less energizing.

Vanessa: Just FYI, I'm three for three on that question.

Interviewee 3: Okay.

Vanessa: Every pastor I've talked to so far has been personnel management. I expected, I was expecting everyone to say conflict resolution and nope, personal management. Perhaps because it is so fraught with challenges, particularly in California too.

Interviewee 3: Yeah. And I would say that that's a great point right there. Partnering with a really competent HR director was a game changer for me and I had someone in that role at [Church Name] that, [Person Name] worked with her as well. She was so good at it. And so, knowing that she knew all the laws and she knew what was current and she had the formal forms and systems and I could focus on the relational personal side. We made a good team and then it was much easier.

Vanessa: Yeah, I can imagine. Of all the things that you do, is there any aspect of your job, now this is like in the totality of what you do, that is um consistently challenging.

Interviewee 3: Gosh, I, consistently challenging? It's funny because most of the, when I looked again, the last, every assignment I've had has been a turnaround or crisis situation. So, it's like all challenge and like diving into that, I think what can be especially challenging and draining is when there's misalignment at the most senior level leading up, either with the board or a senior pastor.

Vanessa: And would you say your last time at [Church Name], I know you're on sabbatical, was an example of that?

Interviewee 3: I, given the, yeah. Are you, I didn't realize this was part of a formal process until I read the interview questions, will names or anything like that be used?

Vanessa: No, no.

Interviewee 3: Okay. Okay.

Vanessa: Even your name won't be used. You'll be called interview, interviewee number three and the name of your church would be disguised, there will be no personal details. In fact, if it's a personal, real personal thing you share, I'll go out of my way to make sure that the details are switched enough that someone can't even deduce...

Interviewee 3: Perfect.

Vanessa: ...thing to whom I'm referencing.

Interviewee 3: Okay, thank you. Then I would say yes, there was our senior pastor. Wonderful man, incredible experience, didn't have any experience in change management, turnaround, or crisis. He had been someone who had experienced favoring growth. Everything had always been up into the right. And so having maybe some misalignment there and then we had a board that had gotten very into the weeds in management and rightly so, during a time when there wasn't a senior pastor when they were interim pastors, so the combination of a board operating at a level that they shouldn't and then not operating at a level that they should, which we needed, and then a senior pastor who was accustomed to things being up into the right and were, was continuing to operate, like I'll do the same things I've done before and it's going to cause the same up into the right and then that not being the reality on the ground and when staff was exceptionally challenging, that was definitely the most challenging for me.

Vanessa: I'm gonna switch gears a little bit in this next question. How do you yourself bridge those secular, necessary aspects of your job with a really sacred aspects of the fact that you are a pastor, and as a pastor you have a covenantal relationship with those whom you pastor?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, I loved that you asked that question. I think number one, for me has been maintaining reverence in all things. There's nothing that is only operational and not sacred and nothing is mundane. And so that perspective, first and foremost, and then second, I've, I strongly believe and obviously, it's scriptural too, but that we will give an account for how we lead and how we manage. And so that creates again, that fear and reverence in it in a healthy way. And then the third thing that I'm like so passionate about, if those first two things are true, and if you looking at scripture, understanding that relationships, God being relational, relationships are the number one thing above all the other. Then that means that the people that God has called to the work of his Kingdom who are saying yes, and most often with fear and trembling, are the greatest asset we have to manage and steward, like those three convictions, yeah, kind of oversee the integration of, or manage the integration of, those two things for me.

Vanessa: If you are going to give some advice to a newly minted pastor, even a pastor of a small church, maybe a solo pastor, about all this experience you've had, and you've worked with some really large churches, had really large staff, but is there a piece of advice that you'd want to give this newly minted pastor on, perhaps, how to operate in this arena of the secular and sacred?

Interviewee 3: Yeah. Oh, gosh. That's such a great question too. I think for me, what I would tell someone is never lose sight of the things that were taught, not first as a pastor, but a follower of Jesus around God's sovereignty, God's mission for the kingdom, whose power it is that these things happen, and the command, the greatest commandment to love. Like that, those that you cannot, while you're doing the work of ministry, losing perspective of those things gets us wrapped around ourselves, our need to succeed and that often again, losing perspective on God's sovereignty. What God might be trying to do in any scenario might not be what we think it is. And so how we even define success or what a successful outcome looks like, we have to be willing to surrender that. And then as you're kind of operating that way, always have time for people and always have time for every interruption that comes your way because otherwise you could really miss what God is doing.

Vanessa: I really like that. Thank you. So, thinking a little bit more theologically now, are there specific biblical examples of leadership that you yourself draw from. And if there are, can you tell me what they may be?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, there's like three which aren't gonna be surprising. One again is Jesus and how he, the rhythms of his life, love being the greatest commandment, how centered he was, not moved by popular expectations of him, and being willing to be so countercultural. Like that's first, I think and foremost. Second Moses, empower and delegate. You know, Moses and Jethro, like, don't, there's no way like if you make it about you, you're gonna, yeah, you're missing the whole point. And then third, which I really love is Nehemiah being strategic and focused. He was so strategic. I love that. Yeah, and I think we often will focus too much maybe on the love and shepherd and what we think the definition of that looks like and not balance it with the strategic and focus.

Vanessa: As a group in your church, do you, do you talk about these biblical leadership examples?

Interviewee 3: I do. Like I, in my own leadership, I'm trying to think. Actually, at [Church Name], [Person Name], he was a senior pastor, was phenomenal about mentoring our senior pastors, which [Person Name] was a part of that group as well. And we had weekly pastor's meetings where we were wrestling with those biblical concepts and what it looked like to apply them regularly. That was a great example for me and I've continued that practice

Vanessa: This last question. So, it's kind of a hard question but do you believe you've encountered any prejudice in ministry, either with your leadership style, with the fact your gender, anything that someone might perceive as your strength or weaknesses?

Interviewee 3: Yeah. And so, I hope I answer this properly because there's like four different questions.

Vanessa: It’s a big question, yeah.

Interviewee 3: So, prejudices to gender? I know, and because, well, it doesn't matter how I felt, I didn't, it didn't upset me and maybe it should have upset me more, was being a woman and not being paid at the same level. That, and that was, that happened and there was multiple times where it was very evident. Being, even being told like, well, your husband owns his own business or, you know, whatever he has a family, it's like, oh my goodness, okay. But because I felt unworthy of my calling at the time to me, it wasn't about being a woman. I was just grateful to be part of God's mission. So maybe didn't stand up for myself in the way I should have. And then there have been times where being a, at the time I didn't have the language around being an eight, being a challenger, that, that was perceived as annoying. And I don't really have an ability, like if everyone's running in one direction and I see a cliff, whatever, you know, that symbolizes, I don't have the capacity to just sit on my hands and be quiet and let everyone do that. So, I had to navigate some of that. I think I overcame it through developing and building trust. That my instincts were right, but I had to fight and to earn the right for those instincts to be trusted I think in a way that the men around the table, because I was usually either the only female or one of a couple and I was the most outspoken, they didn't have to, the men around the table, didn't have to fight in the same way to be heard. And the most recent horrible example, I won't name the church, I was the executive pastor leading one of our campuses through a crisis. The lead pastor of that campus had a moral failure, became very public, he was let go so then I was brought in to lead the church and staff. Another pastor, male, was brought in to teach on the weekends, but I was managing the new search process, the board, the elders, the staff, doing the finances, trying to turn that around, and the search process, I don't know if I said that already. Oh, and what was taught on weekends. I was managing all the spiritual milestones like worship nights, teaching. Yeah. So went to the lead pastor roundtable at this particular church and we got together monthly and we were told in advance, “come prepared so like, what are your top three learnings like for this season.” And so, it came, I was ready when it came, goes around the table, comes to me, it's like, “We're gonna skip you unless of course you're gonna have a fit about it”, and then went on and I was just like, “Okay.”

Vanessa: What did you do?

Interviewee 3: I didn't say anything and I walked out and went, I know, in hindsight oh, there's so many things I wished I'd said. I was so stunned by it actually, that it threw me off. But I left, went to this person's right hand and said, “I will no longer attend these meetings. They're not productive or useful for me”, and then I didn't go anymore.

Vanessa: Wow.

Interviewee 3: Yeah, I was like...

Vanessa: I mean, I hate to say that I haven't heard that before because I have, but it never fails to shock me every single time I hear it.

Interviewee 3: I know, right? Even me. I was, that's why I was so stunned. And what was actually, when I look back on it more hurtful, is that there were some men in that room

that were peers and friends and that not one of them would say, they didn't have the courage to say, “Hey, wait a minute. We know she's leading through something far more challenging than what we're leading through right now. We want to hear.” Like that was more telling to me than, because the gentleman leading, you know, oh gosh, love him but generational differences and just, yeah. Then the last thing I would say is I experience a lot of prejudice to the irony of, because I wasn't a teacher on the weekend. There's a lot of bias given and, and weight to a voice because they stand up and teach on the weekend. And I, the irony in that too is, I overcame some major insecurity, fear, and anxiety of public speaking of any kind to be obedient to my call. And so early on, I was invited to teach multiple times and one, I was fearful, so I'll own that, and two, I didn't understand the opportunity I was being given as a woman because I was new to ministry, and three, because of my anxiety, I had made a commitment that I will only speak in front of a group when I'm the only person that can carry that message. And because I felt like there were a lot of teachers that were, not only were they comfortable with, they loved it and they could do it all day long, that I would focus my energy and effort on the things that I was uniquely gifted at. I didn't realize what that would cost me. One is a woman paving the way for other women, but two, as a way to, you know, marginalize my voice.

Vanessa: And do you still feel that way? Do you still find it difficult?

Interviewee 3: I have gotten, I have wrestled, and there's, that goes back to my, I had a childhood of extreme trauma and abuse and at this age, I've experienced so much healing and there's so much freedom and yet occasionally, it's still definitely gets me. Which is so frustrating.

Vanessa: I know, but we are human people, you know...

Interviewee 3: Right.

Vanessa: With all that that has and all that comes with that. Is there anything else, Interviewee 3, that you might want to share, that I have not asked you that you feel is important for me to know, particularly as a role as a woman, executive pastor?

Interviewee 3: That's a great question. Wow. I think, and I don't know if this is again being more of a challenger and more on the kind of prophetic end of things organizationally, one of my frustrations since enduring COVID, which now, this is a new thought or I haven't verbalized as well so bear with me just a bit.

Vanessa: Just go ahead.

Interviewee 3: Some of the frustrations that we've talked about in the normal day-to-day, whether it's being a woman or a managing challenge and being the challenger, I think was really highlighted during Covid and everything that happened. And one of the things that I think was especially frustrating for me is, in turn around and crisis, like then you overlay it with Covid, it's like, what if God might want to do something completely different than what we've been doing successfully or, you know, marginally successfully,

for the last 20 years. And again, if we believe God is sovereign, that this disruption is an opportunity and if you look at the history of the church, any time it became too institutionalized or too associated with institutions of power, there was disruption. And if you look at the genesis of the church and how it started, Jesus wasn't aligning at all with the institutions and those of power. And so, what might that opportunity or that invitation be for us now, as leaders of the church who were called to lead at this time, knowing that God's church will prevail but what form, or what function, or what it looks like institutionally might be different. Gosh, we have to be willing to like not make those, the, the institution or the form of the function sacred and my, whether it's being a woman, whether it's being a challenger, whether it's being prophetic, that there's not more willingness to ask that question and do things differently has been really heartbreaking for me in a, in a sense.

Vanessa: Yeah. I think that everyone I've spoken to thus far, and a variety of different backgrounds, Covid was a real, maybe, eye opener might be the word, in the way that we we're holding on to almost relics...

Interviewee 3: Yeah.

Vanessa: ...for the sake of the fact that they were a relic and not willing to look at it as an opportunity. And I think there's many, I mean, I know pastors who just quit ministry. It's just too much. It was just too much.

Interviewee 3: Yeah.

Vanessa: And to be able to change and to be able to grow or to be able to let go, all those things that are required of us during an event like Covid, that's something that most of us had not experienced in our life.

Interviewee 3: Yeah.

Vanessa: You know, we didn't live during the reformation, and we didn't live during the time of Jesus, and we didn't live during the Intertestament Period. We didn't live during any of those periods. This is like our first "oh!"...

Interviewee 3: Right.

Vanessa: ...shock to the system, right? And it's unfortunate because I agree with you. I think that while it was a shock to the system and I think that ministry is now recovering, if we just say, if we go back and do it the way we did it before, I don't know that we're utilizing the opportunity that perhaps God has provided to its maximum ability. And it's, and it's sad, but, you know, we also are creatures of habit so we tend to want to go back and do the things that we know work before, even if they're not working.

Interviewee 3: Yeah. Let me go back to Israel, I mean, Egypt. Yeah. I, that was really well said and, and that, so it's been interesting because I've been working with the

spiritual director for the last 4.5 years. When I initially left Mariners and then worked through a bunch of different again assignments, and so I've been on sabbatical the last five months and I'm just now, I have a call with her weekly to process, you know, how now, what, what do I think about some of these things with this kind of break and some fresh perspective. And I'm just now starting to explore what my next assignment might be and I'm fascinated to see. Yeah, I have no idea. I'm very open handed and curious to see how some of these learnings will apply in the new.

Vanessa: Well, given your vast experience and you know, clearly your call to ministry, God's got something up his sleeve. He always does. You don't always get to know what it is though.

Interviewee 3: Right.

Vanessa: That's the patience and the waiting. Yeah, we may have to wander for 40 years.

Interviewee 3: Right. Oh, my goodness.

Vanessa: But we won't wander forever.

Interviewee 3: Right, for sure.

Vanessa: That's the good news.

Vanessa: Okay. I am done with you for today. However, I have found that as I've gone back and listened to my own notes, to these interviews, sometimes questions pop up. So, I wondered if that's true, if I could reach back out to you either for clarification or you know, "what about this?", "what about that?", things that maybe come to me as I listen to the interview over again?

Interviewee 3: Absolutely.

Vanessa: Okay. Great.

Executive Pastor Interview #4

Vanessa: So, Interviewee #4, just a few housekeeping things. What would you say, I mean, in general, how big is [Church Name]?

Interviewee 4: Big in terms of membership or, or budget or what?

Vanessa: Membership, not so much budget, membership and maybe number of staff.

Interviewee 4: So, [Church Name] only is probably about 500 members and about 30 staff, which includes our preschool.

Vanessa: Wow, And now how about [Program Name]?

Interviewee 4: [Program Name] is much larger. There's no official membership because it's on TV...

Vanessa: Right.

Interviewee 4: ...so, but the budget for [Program Name] is 8 million and there are about 40 employees.

Vanessa: And which side do you work on? Both sides or just the [Program Name] side?

Interviewee 4: I, I work on both.

Vanessa: Okay. Wow. I didn't realize that was so many staff. Okay. I'm pretty sure I know where you got your theological training. But can you tell me?

Interviewee 4: [Seminary Name].

Vanessa: Ah yes, a fellow [Seminary Name] alum.

Interviewee 4: Yes.

Vanessa: And outside of [Seminary Name], have you had any formal education in the area of administration, personnel management, conflict resolution, or financial management?

Interviewee 4: So, I do have a Master of Business Administration or MBA, and so that, that would be like the only other training.

Vanessa: And you got your MBA from?

Interviewee 4: The [University Name].

Vanessa: Oh, really? What, what was your undergrad?

Interviewee 4: Political science.

Vanessa: Okay. In your theological training, did you have any leadership or administrative training within that theological training at [Seminary Name]?

Interviewee 4: As you know, that MDiv curriculum is very heavy on theory and very light on practice. And so, you really don't get much practical anything. So, I'm gonna, I'm gonna say leadership, I mean, maybe spiritual leadership, but as far as administrative leadership, no, nothing.

Vanessa: And you are, is your title Executive Pastor?

Interviewee 4: I'm Executive Pastor/Chief Operating Officer.

Vanessa: Okay. Can you give me what a working definition of that term "executive pastor"?

Interviewee 4: It's everything the lead pastor doesn't want to do. So, in my case, the lead pastor teaches and preaches and I do all the administrative stuff and so basically ExP, or executive pastor, is basically understood to be the second chair person who handles operations.

Vanessa: Okay. In that scope of duties, do you also preach and teach? occasionally?

Interviewee 4: Occasionally. Not, not by any means every week but, but sometimes I do. Yeah.

Vanessa: Okay, and you can do this however you want to, but could you give me an overview of your like, daily, weekly, monthly, even annual leadership responsibilities and how you go about executing those?

Interviewee 4: So, every day is different, you never know what's going to happen. But basically, a typical week is just overseeing operations and that includes IT, HR, risk management, working with my people in, in, in accounting, finance. There's another executive pastor, [Person Name] who's, who's only overseeing ministry operations, like age-level ministries, youth, children, you know, bible studies, and that sort of stuff. So basically, it's running all the operations of the ministry except directly supervising the age-level ministries and the preaching and teaching. And so, that's, that's what it is. There's no, you know, plan for every day. It just depends on, on, on what's needed.

Vanessa: How many direct reports do you have?

Interviewee 4: I have six.

Vanessa: Six?
Interviewee 4: Mhm.

Vanessa: Do you meet with them on a regular basis or any formal basis?

Interviewee 4: So, we have a weekly leadership meeting that we all sort of get together in and have used as like a, like a check-in time.

Vanessa: And do you have a form or structure? Is it just ad hoc?

Interviewee 4: It's, it's really ad hoc. I mean, it's, it's just, I think what we talk about is what are, what are your pain points? What are you working on and what does everybody, you know, need to know? And so those are the three things everybody's supposed to share but I mean, that, that, that is, isn't always, is, you know, how it shakes out.

Vanessa: How do you hold your direct reports accountable?

Interviewee 4: Well, they have evaluations every year and they have "smart goals" and they achieve those "smart goals" or don't. And also, if they're not getting you know, their work done, it's, it's pretty obvious. And so, you know, if you see things falling between the cracks, then, then you have to step up.

Vanessa: The annual evaluation, is that based upon a job description?

Interviewee 4: Yeah, so they have a job description and they have "smart goals".

Vanessa: Is that something that you could share with me? Like an example of, here's an example of the job description, an example of the smart goals, and what an evaluation, how you conduct your evaluations, you can wind out and all that.

Interviewee 4: I don't think we could release that now.

Vanessa: Okay, that's fair. Well, you have an MBA so that does give you some formal training but outside of the classroom, have you taken any specific workshops or training in the area of personnel management? So, hiring, delegating, termination, HR law, that type of thing?

Interviewee 4: No, no, I haven't.

Vanessa: Do you have an HR law expert, or HR person?

Interviewee 4: Yes, we have a full-time person?

Vanessa: And does that person report to you?

Interviewee 4: Yes.

Vanessa: Okay. Does that person provide training for the rest of the management staff?
Interviewee 4: As needed, you know, there's no, there's no like, training or regimen in place, but we are aware of training that has to happen every year on like, boundaries or anti-harassment. And so, the HR person would handle all that, yeah.

Vanessa: Okay. How about workshops or other type of, even reading, on conflict resolution, with respect to your staff and perhaps your volunteer base?

Interviewee 4: Me, not personally, you know, we did get some of that in seminary but as, as far as like conflict resolution training, no.

Vanessa: So then how do you manage conflict?

Interviewee 4: Well, you just try and do it as, as scripture says, you know, and, and try and if you're the one who has conflict, you know, you engage with it biblically and if it's not going to work one-on-one, then you take someone with you and you try to do it with someone. And if the two of you can't get anywhere, then you have to call the board of elders. And if the board of elders and everybody involved can't reach the other person, then, you know, there has to be discipline. As far as practicing conflict resolution, it's all been trial and error.

Vanessa: That's fair and probably true for the majority of pastors.

Interviewee 4: Right.

Vanessa: I'm gonna suspect that you've had quite a bit of training within your MBA in financial management and reading the balance sheet, profit loss, and budgeting.

Interviewee 4: Yes.

Vanessa: So, within that, has your training always been the not-for-profit sector or did you work for the for-profit sector?

Interviewee 4: So, I worked for my family's accounting business before going to ministry full-time so I'm pretty good with accounting.

Vanessa: Okay. Just out of curiosity, wasn't part of my questions, but I'm curious. Given that you have a bent towards accounting, by the way, I love accounting, what called you in ministry?

Interviewee 4: Yeah. I mean, lining up numbers wasn't gonna be what I wanted my life's work to be. I was called to ordering the resources of, of, of, of the church. You know, I knew I would never be a teaching pastor full-time, like preach every Sunday. You know, that's just not, I don't think I could think of that many things to really say, you know, that are different. So, I wouldn't want to do that, but I am good at administration. And so, it was just a call and you know, you just, you just, everybody who goes in the ministry full-time has to decide whether they're going to answer the call or not.

Vanessa: Okay, that's fair. In the areas that, personnel management, conflict resolution, and financial management - is there one of those areas that you find more challenging than others?

Interviewee 4: So, the most challenging area is HR. HR is just the most granular and what you can do in the state of California, what you can't do in the state of California, and, and then you have the fact that we have protections under federal law and then you have California law and things you can opt into. So, the HR is, is extraordinarily complex.

Vanessa: Yes. Amen, brother. I have a business so I totally understand.

Interviewee 4: It's a lot.

Vanessa: Of all the your daily, monthly, annual tasks, is there one aspect, outside of HR, is there another aspect of your job that, that challenges you?

Interviewee 4: You know, challenging in a good way or challenging in a bad way?

Vanessa: You can define that however you choose to.

Interviewee 4: I think, I think the accounting piece is a challenge because you need to run a church like a business, you need to follow the laws, and you need to do what, what a church is supposed to do but you, you don't run a church like a secular business - there's still a faith component to it. So, I think, I think the challenge is trusting in God, believing, walking by faith, while at the same time being attuned to the fact that we're, we are called to use our heads and our common sense too.

Vanessa: Was there anything during the time of Covid that exacerbated any of those challenges for you?

Interviewee 4: Sure. Covid exacerbated everything, right? I mean, like, like everything went on its head from like having in-person worship services to, you know, one week we would have staff on-site and then we'd have someone who would test positive, and suddenly everybody's working at home and we're shifting to everybody being at home and then we start to bring some people back and then someone else tests positive. And so, it's, it's just, it was, it took a challenging environment and it made it a lot worse.

Vanessa: And would you say that now that we're, in theory, through this Covid period of time, has ministry, ministry, your ministry, restored, kind of, its old balance or do you find yourself in a new spot?

Interviewee 4: Yeah. I don't think there's any returning to what it was. So, it's, it's gonna be something new. Hybrid looks like it's here to stay. Exactly what that looks like for us and for other churches, I mean, I, I don't think any entities going back to Monday through Friday, everybody on campus. I think it's just, people just aren't interested in that anymore and of course, attracting people, retaining people, and trying to attract and retain someone when they have to be in the office full-time. You know, I, I just think we're in, in, in, in, in, you know, new times.

Vanessa: That's for sure. This is kind of going back to a comment you made earlier but how do you bridge those secular, necessary aspects of the administration, whether it be HR, conflict resolution, finance, it doesn't matter, there's still, there's a very secular component to them with the kind of sacred covenantal call as a pastor?

Interviewee 4: Yeah, it really is attention. You can't, you can't fall on either side of it, you know, because you can't be that person who just says, "You know what? We're a church, we're spiritual enterprise. We're not gonna do anything the way of the world and so we're not gonna follow all these meddlesome HR rules and, and, you know, it's just, it's, it's, it's between us and God, right? And so, I'm not accountable to anybody else." And so that's not gonna work and the other extreme is not gonna work either where it's like, "You know, we're just gonna run this like a, like a regular business, you know. We're just going to do everything that Amazon does and we're gonna look like Amazon, we're gonna act like Amazon." I mean, it's, it's a spiritual enterprise as well, and so, there's constantly a tension between yes, we're a church and that means we are spiritually grounded and spiritually formed and have a spiritual mission, but we do have to run it like a business. And so, I don't think there is a, there is a magic answer there.

Vanessa: Okay. And if you were going to give advice then to someone coming into ministry out of, maybe out of seminary or whatever, or stepping into either solo pastor role or the first-time associate role, what advice would you give them about bridging those two aspects of the job?

Interviewee 4: Well, a lot of it is experience. So, you just have to, you have to live through it. You have to like, I learn from my own experiences and I learn from the experiences of, of colleagues. If, if someone were new, I'd say get, you know, get a mentor, get someone who's been through it, someone who's seen it all, you know, who's been in this seat for a while and just ask, you know, ask her and say, "Hey, you know, how did you do it? You know, how did you learn, have you ever seen this come up?", and, and you know, and just, just learn from her and, and, and learn from what she's seen and kind of maybe get a group going and kind of learn as, as, as, as, as you go. I think for me, one of, of the questions on there was, was how does the theological piece intersect with the business piece? And I think it's really at every level, but at the ground level, it's God's, it's, it's, it's God's ministry, right? I mean, it's God's money. And so, I think when you come into the job with that understanding, that everything that you've been entrusted

with isn't yours, it's God's, I think that helps you to make the right decisions and of course, your, your, your, your objective in everything should be to follow God's will. And so, as squishy as that may seem, you can find what that is by speaking to other people, you know, asking around, you know, holy conferencing. And I would say the number one thing that's kept me saying is, is number one is what, what is it God wants and to always try and find out what, what, what that is and, and, and, and walk that way.

Vanessa: And do you seek that through prayer, through meditation? How do you seek God's will?

Interviewee 4: It's, it's, it's all that. It's praying, it's, you know, talking to colleagues, it's, it's, it's, it's signs and wonders, you know, you just, you just put it out there and you see what happens.

Vanessa: And when you started in the ministry, how long, first of all, how long have you been in ministry?

Interviewee 4: Part-time about 20 years, full-time here for about seven years.

Vanessa: Okay. And so, when you entered, or went to work for, has it always been with Bobby?

Interviewee 4: No, I worked for, for a few other churches too.

Vanessa: Okay. Did you seek out a mentor?

Interviewee 4: I did. It was great. I was very blessed to have, have lead pastors. Also, good friends with one of the pastors at the [Church Name]. He was really helpful to me and he was my CPE supervisor so he obviously knew me quite well and was, was, was a, was, was a great mentor to me.

Vanessa: Do you currently mentor anyone?

Interviewee 4: Not right now, no.

Vanessa: And is that because your schedule is too full or you don't feel like mentoring is your gift?

Interviewee 4: I think it's really dependent on the right situation, you know, that it would have to be the right person. And so, I, I don't think I'm, I've landed on a spot of yes or no. It would be I'm kind of the person who food just, you know, waits on God. If there's an opportunity I'll take it, but I'm not gonna try and open up a closed door and I'm not gonna try and, you know, break a window. So, if, if, if, the right opportunity presented itself, then I'd be open to it.

Vanessa: Okay. From a theological point of view, are there any specific biblical examples of leadership that you rely on, turn to, utilize, whatever word you want to use, that help you to execute your job?

Interviewee 4: Yeah, I saw that question. It's so hard to nail down a few of them, like, like it's all like operating in the background, you know, all of, of, of the Moses call story, and all of, of, of the David's story, and Jesus and his, his disciples and, and Ruth, and you know, Esther and it, it's just all, it's all sort of like meshed into one big narrative in my head. I would say that obviously, the biggest thing for us is servant leadership. You know, we want to do leadership the way that Jesus did it. So, Jesus in, in action in the gospels, you know, would be certainly where we look first. Most recently, the one that came to mind was, I was teaching on the story of the woman at the well in the Gospel of Luke and, not Luke, John, sorry.

Vanessa: John - the Samaritan woman?

Interviewee 4: Yeah, and so, basically, Jesus was able to encounter her, get to the issues that needed to get at so he was able to confront her in a way that challenged her choices and her lifestyle, but he was able to do it without shaming her. And so, I think that that's our mission - is to encounter, engage, lead, and correct, but do it in a way where you come out on the other side of it and you've won that person over. And so that, that's probably the most recent example.

Vanessa: How, the irony is not lost on me that I'm writing a devotion this week on that very passage.

Interviewee 4: It really, it's, it's a great passage. It takes a lot of exegetical work to get behind it. Like, I didn't know when I first looked at it that the fact that the woman at the well, well, first of all has no name, right?

Vanessa: Right.

Interviewee 4: So, then she's a Samaritan but there, being at the well alone, it's kind of like a, like a sad, you know, commentary. The going to the well was a social activity and so, the fact that she was at the well, having her time, which should have been social time, it shows she's sort of an outcast and, you know, it's like, like little, little things like that. I wouldn't have known that.

Vanessa: Yeah, I agree. It's actually really, really rich, rich.

Interviewee 4: It is.

Vanessa: Now this may or may not apply to you because you're a white male, but I'm gonna ask the question anyway - have you encountered any prejudice either in your leadership style or perceived strengths or even, maybe it is true today because there's certainly kind of a backlash about race, gender, or anything in those areas?

Interviewee 4: Yeah. I mean, I don't, I don't, I don't feel like, you know, it's something I dwell on but yes, I'm a white male but I'm also ethnically Jewish white male.

Vanessa: Oh, really!

Interviewee 4: Yeah.

Vanessa: I did not know that.

Interviewee 4: [Last Name] is a, a, a Jewish last name and so ethnically, I am Jewish. And so, I don't know that there's ever been any, any problem with it, you know, I think people are sometimes perplexed. You can be a Christian even though your heritage is Jewish. And like, well, Judaism is more than a religion. It's also, you know, it's also a, it's, it's basically a form of ethnicity, ethnicity. And, you know, there, there's, there's always that and, you know, I think at one point, I was serving the Methodist church and basically, they told me they weren't putting in anymore white males. And so, I mean, I was like, okay, well, you know, I understand. And so, that was not a great fit for me and I appreciated them saying that they really wanted to focus on, on, on, on, on women and people of color. And so, I mean, I don't think that was really, really discrimination, but that's something.

Vanessa: Yeah. Is there anything that you, any advice you want to offer or anything you want to say about your job as an executive pastor or the truth in general that perhaps I did not ask you?

Interviewee 4: I think the, the key thing is, is all what you've said is true and all of what you've asked is important. But the number one thing about being an executive pastor is your relationship with the senior pastor. You and the senior pastor have to have chemistry. And so, basically, as an ExP, you are, you are functioning as your lead pastor's administrative half. And so, you got to know your senior pastor. You've got to be able to rein in your senior pastor. So, I don't know how, I don't know how open Lissa is to being, you know, confronted, but...

Vanessa: She's gotten used to me.

Interviewee 4: ...okay. Well, that's good because a lot of senior pastors are not used to being held accountable and they're not used to being confronted about things. And so, someone who's, hasn't been subject to that, it could be hard, but it's, it's really important because you're there because your, your senior pastor has blind spots and you're there to fill those blind spots in a loving way. But if, if, if loving is not going to work, then that, that becomes, that becomes heavy lifting, right? And so, you have to have the relationship and the chemistry and if, if your lead pastor sees you as more of a friendly influence than a constraining influence that, that, that is really important.

Vanessa: Have you run into a situation in your executive position where you're having to confront those blind spots and it was particularly challenging?

Interviewee 4: You know, I mean, it's, it's, it's basically every day, right, when, when your senior pastor's a creative visionary type, you know, and they're just sort of out there dreaming about things and planning about things and, you know, lots of ideas and, you know, huge ideas and, you know, it's, it's every day is like, okay, well, what, what should we actually devote our time to? And so, I think it's, it's just always, it's always waiting and seeing, right? I mean, I just think you have to, you have to just put it out there and test it. Specifically, I can't think of anything in particular where some, some, some major thing needed to be confronted. But, you know, like, like one thing that we want to do here, you know, Bobby was like, "Let's do a chocolate café", right? And so, he, he just, he just walks in one day and says, "I want to do a chocolate cafe." I'm like, "Okay, well, let's, let's, let's explore that." And so, the answer was, was, was never "no", it was just, let's, let's, let's put some attention to that in terms of like a business model and is that what the community needs? And well, the city approved it and is that the right use of our space? And you know, there was a lot more that, that, that went into it.

Vanessa: And do you have a chocolate cafe?

Interviewee 4: We do not...yet.

Vanessa: Oh, okay - yet. You have to let me know if you do. I love chocolate. So...

Interviewee 4: Me too.

Vanessa: Okay. Anything else you want to share, Russ?

Interviewee 4: No, I just appreciate the opportunity to speak with you and I wish you all the best.

Vanessa: Thank you very much. I am going to, you know what, I'm going to ask you, maybe because I don't know how often you have to pray in a group, but I'm going to ask you to close us in prayer. How's that?

Interviewee 4: All right. Well, something I'm quite used to at our meetings and in other, other environments so, yeah. Heavenly Father, we thank you for Vanessa and we thank you for her interest in this area and for the opportunity to gain more educational experience and to learn from, from her colleagues and all those around her, Lord. I just thank you for this opportunity to, to talk about ministry today and to, to unpack our experiences and prepare future leaders and just, Lord, pray that you would bless her, bless her writing, bless her planning, bless her question asking. Lord, may this be a project that honors and glorifies you in every way while at the same time enriching her and preparing her for what you have next. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Vanessa: Amen. Well, I thank you and as a fellow MBA person, I get you totally.

Interviewee 4: Good, I'm glad someone does.

Vanessa: I do. Thank you so much for this. Really, really appreciate it. It's just been so interesting talking to a variety of different pastors from a variety of different faiths traditions. I had the ability to interview a former [Church Name] executive pastor.

Interviewee 4: Oh, wow!

Vanessa: Now that was interesting.

Interviewee 4: I bet he or she had some great stories.

Vanessa: Yeah, definitely. So, this is so interesting because everyone, I mean, there's quite a bit of similarity in the EP viewpoint, but there's also quite a bit of divergence and that has surprised me. So, this has been really interesting and I really appreciate it.

Interviewee 4: Well, you're welcome.

Vanessa: Okay. If I have other questions is, because what I'll do is go back and transcribe the interview, and sometimes when I do that questions come to mind. Would it be alright if I reached out to you via email?

Interviewee 4: Absolutely.
Vanessa: Okay, great. Appreciate that. Okay. Thank you so much for your time today.

Interviewee 4: You're welcome, happy to help.

Vanessa: Okay.

Appendix G: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

This was the statement from my project:
Conduct a focus group by inviting five to seven long-term Senior Pastors who have not had this additional training. Use questions developed for the focus group to determine if and where they learned these needed skills, and which ones have been the most helpful. I will include several questions on gender differences to determine areas that have been helpful and harmful in the interactions.

Ice- Breaker question – Aside from ministry, what talent do you wish you possessed?
For example – I wish I could paint as my uncle was an artist and painted beautifully.

Focus Group Questions –

1. If you have a process for interviewing for staff positions, where did you learn it and how do you utilize it?

2. How do you recruit and train your volunteer leaders?

    - Have you ever had to deal with a volunteer leader who was problematic or ineffective – please briefly describe.

    - Depending on the answer – can you share what has been challenging when recruiting and training volunteer leaders?

3. How do you determine if your staff and volunteers are completing their duties on time and accurately? Do you have a process for this?

    - Depending on the answer – do you use this consistently or occasionally? Has this timing worked well for you?
    - Would you describe your process more as casual or formal (structured)? Please explain

4. How do you sharpen or grow your leadership abilities?
   (possibly delete this question or save as an extra)

5. How do you define leadership success in your ministry?

    - Depending on answer - Is this your personal definition or is this what you feel the others expect?

6. How does your church define leadership success?
   Possibly delete as this answer may come out of previous question.

7. How do you balance the necessary administrative oversight of staff and volunteers (and possible need to provide corrected feedback) with your role as their pastor?

8. Can you share a time when the blurring of these roles created a problem and how you dealt with it?

   This is one question where I might want to get multiple answers.

9. Have you experienced any stereotyping in your role as pastor-leader that you felt was directly related to your gender? Can you share details and how you handled it?

    - Do you feel the stereotyping led to discrimination? If so please explain.

10. Do you think there are specific gender-related strengths and weaknesses as it relates to ministry and how would you describe them?

11. Do you feel that gender stereotypes interfere in your interactions with staff and volunteers? Can you share how you handle this?

12. How do you handle conflict within your staff and can you give me an example?

    Is it different with volunteers and can you give me an example?

13. Please rank the following four areas in importance for solo pastor/ head of staff as it relates to knowledge and training for staff and volunteer leaders.
    - Interviewing, hiring, and training
    - Delegating tasks and accountability follow up
    - Conflict management and resolution
    - Understanding the basics of church finance

Appendix H: Focus Group Transcription

Vanessa: And I'm gonna open us with a word of prayer. Will you join me? Gracious and almighty God, I give you so much thanks for the work of these ministers in the world. Each one different, yet special. Each one gifted each one carrying out the work for the Kingdom of God. Let our time to today be also for the blessing in the work of the Kingdom of God. And I ask this in the name of your son. Amen.

Vanessa: So I wanna introduce Danielle. Danielle, you will turn your video on for a moment? Danielle is my editor and she is very familiar with my project. She is on the East Coast as well. So, Focus Group Member #1 is in [State] and Danielle is in Virginia. She will be observing, but her video camera will be off for the majority of the time. At the very end of the focus group, we will be launching a poll and she will be doing that. And so, I will, did you wanna make?

Danielle: Yes, I do need you to add me as a co-host, please so that I may launch the poll.

Vanessa: There's always something I forget to do. Participants. Why are you not coming up? There we go. Whoop. Hm. Oh, dear.

Danielle: Oh, Zoom.

Vanessa: I know. Gallery. Well, I know the problem. Danielle, make as a co-host, make co-host.

Danielle: Good to go.

Vanessa: Ok, great. All right. We're not going to wait for our fifth individual because I want to be mindful of the time today. I want to remind you the purpose of this focus group and so I'm conducting this in order to listen to what you have to say about skills that you have learned over your time in ministry, pretty much focusing on administrative skills and so that I can deduce from that which might be most helpful in developing my workshops, which is part of my DMin project. There will be several questions towards the end of our time today on gender so I'm just letting you know that. What I would like to remind you about is a few ground rules. I want you guys to do all the talking. I'm here to listen. I will only ask questions or follow-up questions. I'd like to hear from everyone but not everyone will be able to answer every question. Otherwise, we will not make an hour and a half. There aren't right answers or wrong answers. There's just your experiences. What stays, what we say together or what you say together in this focus group, stays here. When this focus group is transcribed, your names will not be mentioned, you will be just mentioned as focus group member. Number one, number two, number three, number four, if you use the name of your church or you're showing an example, you use somebody's name, don't worry about it. All of that will be changed so

that we can protect the innocent. And that way you can be totally authentic and honest in your answers. I would like your permission, if I think someone might be talking too long and we need to hear other voices, I'd like your permission to interrupt you if that would be all right. OK. Good. And also, I'd like if you would, when I ask a question, if you would raise your hand so that I can call on you rather than just have you start speaking because I wanna make sure that I'm capturing who is speaking and when they're speaking. Everybody okay with the ground rules? Great. All right. So, we shall begin. Here we go. Here's the first question. If you have a process for interviewing for staff positions, where did you learn it? And how do you utilize it? [Focus Group Member #1]?

Focus Group Member #1: I'll, I'll, I'll jump in. We do have a process that we utilize for hiring staff here at [Church Name]. Where I learned it is through trial and error really of having done this before at my previous pastorate and kind of bringing certain nuances together to make best practices for hiring. I also have learned over the years that it's important depending upon the job we're hiring for that, we have the right people at the table to help in answering, asking the questions. But the formulation of the questions and the like starts with me and the administrative team and, we move from there.

Vanessa: Great. Thank you. Does anybody else have something they'd like to add, [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM#2: Well, we have, you know, we have a personnel manual and it has sort of a basic outline of, you know, what to do if there's a vacancy, you know, in terms of posting the position and, you know, which mission that the church is in charge and who's involved. But, you know, but the actual, you know, what questions are we gonna ask? That's, that's, you know, kind of down to the people who are appointed for that particular search?

Vanessa: Ok, great. Thank you. Anyone else? [Focus Group Member #3].

FGM #3: So, we, if there's a hire to be made in, in the church, the first thing is we determine who makes the hire. So, it depends who, where in our, our job totem pole, that person lands. So, whoever their direct report is, is the person that will ultimately make the hire. Second part of the process is, do we have an updated job description for what we're aiming for? The third process is developing questions out of that job description that will get at the idea of a past experience that a person has had, that shows that, that they can live into what it is we're proposing. So, the idea of past experience is the best indicator of future experience. If they've succeeded at overcoming conflict, we might see them, the part of the description is dealing with conflict. We, we'd ask when in, when in the past, have you dealt with the conflict? And how did you deal with it? And I'd say most of that stuff comes out of my business background before coming to the church, I had an HR, a Marketing degree, and some of my old classes come back to mind when we develop these processes and then once and then once we make the hire, there's the paper trail that has to be done. Job description, personnel, handbook has to be, they have to be given that check a box that that's happened. All the 1099 stuff has to happen and then what we do to onboard them in terms of is fairly systematic.

Vanessa: Ok. Great. [Focus Group Member #4], did you have anything to add in that?

FGM #4: Just because we have a very loose association, there's no, you know, overarching suggestion. So, each, the churches I've been in, each has their own process. The church I'm in now we, I've been here for four years. And so, we haven't had any hires, but we do have an HR person on our Board of Trustees who's discovering that the, this the process is fairly hazy in terms of who does what and, and the Trustees have some responsibilities. So, it is not as clear, although we're trying to develop that. In past churches, it's been basically, I think as [Focus Group Member #2] said, whichever group, for instance, if it's a, if it's a Director of Christian Education will involve the education people. In the churches I've been in, the decision for compensation usually rests with the Board of Trustees. But we, we put together committees that reflect who has the expertise in that area. So it's, but it, it's, it's as I said in, in the current position and it's, it's a little hazier and when we have to do a hire, it could be, we will need some clarification.

Vanessa: OK. I'm gonna move on to the second question. How do you recruit and train your volunteer leaders?

FGM #3: Let's speak initially. We, we actually just six months ago, made a hire of someone who will do senior ministry in our church but the other half of her job is volunteer coordinate, coordinating, because we recognize that was a real gap for us in terms of figuring out how to equip the people that we want to do things. And so, part of that puzzle for us is we're just beginning to figure it out. But it's putting, it's on the job training really is what it is. Put, put volunteers next to someone who's already doing it and allow them to pick up what's already happening and ask questions. It's not very formalized.

Vanessa: OK. I'd like to hear from one other person on this question before I ask a follow up on this question. Go ahead, [Focus Group Member #2].

FGM #2: Well, I, I would just say it's, it's, it's not very systematic or formal or formal. You know, the people that are currently doing whatever it is, you know, approach people to join them and they kind of learn on the job. I, I wouldn't say there's a particularly formal recruiting or training process.

Vanessa: Ok, great. Thank you. As a follow-up to that question, have you ever had to deal with a volunteer leader who was problematic and ineffective? And if yes, can you describe how you handled it?

FGM #4: We had a long, long time ago and this is just sort of a, an amusing moment. We had a church school teacher who had been there for 30 years. It was very difficult. The sixth graders didn't like him. He was time from, we had a retirement party hoping he'd retire and he didn't. So that was an unsuccessful move. But in, we have had a few occasions when we have had colleagues and, and they, in both situations have

intentionally left me out of the conversation because I theoretically have had conversations with the people in a more pastoral sense to talk about, "Is there anything else you would like to do?" The history of the church I'm in now, they actually kick someone out of the church membership, for being difficult and that created great wounds and it's certainly something that I would avoid at all costs. That it's, we've found that to make someone who's difficult, put in a new position, we've done that several times or make their, their presence less relevant to the, to the difficulties. So, it's, it really has to be handled for, for us, it's always been on a, what's the situation? Who's the person? How do we deal with it first, if there's a pastoral issue and then administratively, how is that handled by the groups who are most affected?

Vanessa: Great. A second follow up to that is when you are training your volunteer leaders or recruiting your volunteer leaders, what is the most or the largest or the most difficult part of that? What do you find as the most challenging part, speaking about volunteer recruitment [Focus Group Member #1]?

FGM #1: So, I think for us, the challenging part is we try to go into a pool of, of people who have the time. A lot of our retirees serve as volunteers here. I think the challenging part in training them, some of them is that they bring their expertise from the, whatever their previous jobs are and they want to implement that without, you know, really following the guidelines that we have set for what they're supposed to do and so kind of helping them to not interject past experiences that are not relevant to the current experience has been a challenge for us over some time.

Vanessa: Thank you, Anyone else? [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM #2: Yeah, I would say time, I mean, both in terms of recruiting people who have time to do the, the job that is needed. And in training people who will put in the time to come to any kind of training, we might, we might set up. I think we've gone to more on the job experience simply because in the past when we've said, "OK, you know, training for this and such is gonna be, you know, on four successive Sundays, you know, after church." It's just been very inconsistent that people will commit to doing that. Zoom has actually helped, I mean, people can do it from home without having to figure out what they're doing with their kids or driving at night, you know, whatever their, their challenge is, they'll sometimes be more, more likely to participate. But yeah, I would say time for sure.

Vanessa: OK, thank you. I'm gonna move on to our third question. How do you determine, now, this is for staff and volunteers both, so your answers may be bifurcated. How do you determine if your staff and volunteers are completing their duties on time and accurately. And do you have a process for this? [Focus Group Member #3]?

FGM #3: So, so with staff, it's a little more formalized in a, in a performance review that happens yearly. We've set something up through ADP that that triggers a yearly performance review with a set of questions that we've developed for each for each person. And so, there's a meeting in, in essence between supervisor and, and employee to make sure that expectations or are met, you know, wherever gaps are, they're, they're

recognized. And the hope, at least from, from our, our side is always that none of the what happens in the formalized process should be a surprise if we're, if we're actually supervising people all the way along, a performance review should simply just, you know, write it, write down what actually has already been going along. With the volunteers, it's a little more difficult because there's nothing formalized there and there's, there's no motivation with a paycheck to do that. But I think it's at least in our case, it's, it's making sure that the people who are volunteering, feel supported in what they're doing. So that, that you're invested, you know, if you, if you can show that you're invested in them as the pastors and the staff and are behind them, it gives you a little more room to address, you know, where we're headed and how we get there. And I think that that tends to be how we, ensure that our, our volunteers are doing what we want them to do is we don't just send them off alone, without, without support. Because otherwise they don't always know what it is that's expected of them. So, I'd say our approach to it is maybe team people up with others so that there's sort of a sharing of that, of that responsibility rather than just one person off on their own.

Vanessa: So, if I'm hearing you correctly, you, you're very structured with paid staff, but you're less structured with volunteers. Would that be a correct summation?

FGM #3: Absolutely. And, but I'd say with volunteers, the process for accountability is, is in some way, linked to having them, not off on their own, doing something. But if they're with at least maybe another staff member or another volunteer, there's sort of a mutual accountability that keeps them headed in the right direction.

Vanessa: Ok. Anyone else?

FGM #3: But informal.

FGM #1: I, I'll go quickly. You know, it's sort of the same as, as, as [Focus Group Member #3] has mentioned. But we do a mid-year review for the staff and then we do an end-of-the-year review for staff. This is for paid staff and we have a merit system. So, you know, based upon how many goals you achieved based on the criteria of your job, it will then depend upon whether or not you get a merit increase or, or the like for the paid staff for the volunteers. Again, it is, it is a little more challenging. One of the things I found though that has been helpful is that we do an end-of-the-year gathering for all of our volunteers in December. And we do this big, you know, luncheon, type deal. Sometimes it's pot luck, sometimes we bring in food. But then when the, when I get up to speak to the volunteers, I thank them for their service. But then I also talk about best practices and things that we can do and how do you think we can improve in some areas? And it really gets the conversation going and the volunteers become motivated because we're doing the celebration. But at the same time, pick up tips and tidbits that can help them increase productivity in whatever area they're volunteering in.

Vanessa: Thank you. Moving on to our next question. How do you define success in your ministry?

FGM #4: Yeah, I mean, I guess it is a very, I don't know if it's complex but it's a very subjective question and how we define it ourselves. I think varies significantly from how others may want to measure it. I've just been through a process where conversation with some people that I respect deeply but feel like even compensation in the ministry might be based on how many people join the church that is sort of like, which strikes me like bounty hunting. That and, and that the sort of the conversation was that it should be members, money, and attendance that those would be the three. But interestingly, in the conversation that was held without my presence, I mean, when I, they were doing an evaluation based on my self-evaluation and then they, the trust, the personnel committee, and the Board of Trustees were talking about, they realized that that wasn't adequate. So, I think they're trying to figure out how you measure that. For me, it's a question of whether, how people feel when they come, whether people are welcomed when they come, whether they're responsive and asking questions so that it, it certainly makes a difference in how many people are sitting in the pews. But for me, you know, it, it, it doesn't measure, you know, what happened was, was, was my presence with someone who was very ill, helpful and, you know, did, did a sermon elicit questions and was I available when someone knocked on the door and needed help? So that I, I think it's, it's difficult for me. I, I've, I can measure most by if I feel like I'm being authentically me for better or worse. But it's, it's, it's, it's not easy and it's hard for, for anyone to under those. That's a very, very gray area between the ministry and the congregation and those who feel like they are in a position to make decisions based on success.

Vanessa: Thank you. I'd like to hear from a couple more on this particular question. [Focus Group Member #3]?

FGM #3: I think the tough one is for pastors is how many people attended? What does the budget look like? You know, are we making our budget goals? But, but the larger the, the subjective things are harder to count and quantify, but I think they're probably more meaningful, how many people are, are actively in small groups pursuing a life of discipleship. How many people do we have on local mission and involved in, in in serving people in our community on a regular basis? Yeah, they're, they're still countable but not as, as countable as Sunday is. But I think it's, it's the question of engagement, how many people are, are engaged in the things that you want them to be doing, whether it's smaller Bible studies or serving. I think those are, are bigger questions for us.

Vanessa: Thank you. Anyone else like to, [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM #2: Yeah, I would say, you know, it, and it like, again, it's hard to, it's hard to really measure, you know, what's the impact that, that the particular ministry is having? And I can think of you know, we had a big event about 18 months ago. We had a, you know, a national, nationally known person come and speak and, you know, had a couple of events over the period of a weekend, we had, you know, hundreds of people who came. But now 18 months later, I'm kind of looking back at that and saying, but, you know, it felt really good at the time. You know, there was lots of people on campus and, you know, the local paper came and all that but, you know, trying to think, you know, what, what impact did that really have long term on this congregation or on the wider

community? And I, I don't know that it, you know, I'm having a hard time, you know, you know, there are a couple of things I can say. Oh yes, this grew out of that event, but not a lot. And yet there are some, some things we've done that involve far fewer people, far fewer dollars that I, I see having this, you know, ripple effect, you know, continuing on months, even years later. So, I guess, look to the impact rather than those tangible things that you measure right in the moment.

Vanessa: Thank you. And [Focus Group Member #1], would you like, I'd like to hear from you as well.

FGM #1: Yeah. Just quickly, I'm I, I concur with everything that has been said. I attended a conference recently in [City], called the [Conference Name], led by [Name] and one of the things that I took away from there with the gathering of pastors is that we can no longer just look at what they deemed as bodies, budgets, and buildings. You know, we have to look beyond that and our measurables need to be in ministry and mission and momentum. What is the momentum of your church and how you're growing people from the inside out? And we talked about this in context of COVID, you know, because all of us were hit with when COVID happened where we couldn't have people in our, our congregations to now trying to get people back. And so, if we can't do the bodies, buildings, budgets type deal like we did before, what then is really the one thing or several things that, that, that really can be measured or is a measurable thing within the context of our, our congregation. And I think mission and ministry, we were able to do a lot of things even though we weren't physically in the building. We, we said the church has left the building and we were able to do, make impactful things in the community. So those things count. And so that, that opened our eyes to a lot of things. So, I just want to share that.

Vanessa: Thank you. Our next, my next question is slightly different. Now, how do you balance the necessary administrative oversight of your staff and volunteers and maybe the need to correct them with the fact that you are their pastor?

FGM #1: I, I'll, I'll go, you know. So ,two sides, [State] is an at-will state. So, when someone comes to work here, we can dismiss without cause here that's just under state law. And then also we have people that work here that are not members of the church. Which are, those individuals are a lot easier to kind of just being honest to, to deal with because there's no central attachment to the church. Now, we do have people who are members who work here and the oversight of them is a bit harder. But I found that I have to keep everything above board the same across, across the sphere because, you know, if we don't, then there will be, you know, that whole thing of, you know, if you're a member, then you get perks and, and prestige versus those who aren't and we try to stay away from that. So, the balance is, has been, it's been challenging, but at the same time, it's been good because everybody knows that we're gonna sing from the same sheet of music and, and, and everybody's gonna be held accountable for what they are responsible for. I have had to let go of someone who was a member of the church, it was not easy, a lot of hurt feelings, you know, whispers in the congregation. But at the end of the day, you know, I was, I was able to stand on sound principle because it was about the job

performance and not necessarily trying to cut them off from, from being members, some of them have stayed, some of them have left, but I try to keep everything even-keeled across the board, whether you're a member or not.

Vanessa: Thank you. Would someone else like to answer specifically about how they handle it with volunteers? [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM #2: Yeah. You know, I would say if it's, you know, in church with, with volunteers when it's a church member, I mean, the relationship, you know, the ongoing relationship really has to factor in and how to, you know, how can you preserve that relationship, you know, both in terms of your relationship with them as a pastor, but also their relationship with the community as a church. And I, I'd say, you know, if it's, if it's a matter of, you know, maybe the volunteer role that they've got is just not the right one for them, then, you know, you can kind of try to, you know, figure out you can take some time and try to figure out a solution to that, you know, give them a slightly different role. I'd say if it's something that's just really glaring. I know, I, I had an experience this has been a couple a while back but someone who was, you know, teaching an adult education class and treating it like a graduate seminar, you know, basically, you know, you know how, you know, that was saying that's the dumbest idea. But what a stupid question, you know, like, like graduate students would, would, would spar with each other and we said, you know, we can't do that and we're gonna have somebody else, you know, finish, finish out the, the rest of this class. And he left the church right away and, and said it was because, you know, we were so, you know, closed-minded and he was bringing, you know, these challenging ideas and like, no, it was because you were being a jerk, you know, challenging ideas are fine. Being a jerk in class is not fine, say quite that way. But yeah, I think sometimes if it's something really, you know, harmful, then you kind of, you can't, you can't put the relationship just that relationship is the primary thing.

Vanessa: Would anyone else care to answer either with the balancing of paid staff and, or volunteer staff with the fact that you were their pastor?

FGM #4: I think that the one thing that happened recently is we had a one of our wonderful volunteers with the youth, started talking about demons and devils to the junior high kids and, and it just took really both the Christian education person and I were able to talk with her in a, in a non, in a very comfortable pastoral way and it solved the problem and, and the, like, you know, that was, that could have been really awful, but it turned out that she was open-hearted enough to hear us and still hold on to her beliefs. But realize it was not, it was not appropriate for kids hear. So, so I don't think I've had any serious issues with volunteers that I can remember. God knows, I don't remember a lot. That, that really compromised that, that were devastating or as serious as even [Focus Group Member #2]'s situation.

Vanessa: OK. How about reflecting back? Same question. But now I want you to reflect backwards into your ministry years where you knew you blurred those lines. And what did you do about it?

FGM #2: Blurred which lines?

Vanessa: The line between being a boss-leader, particularly with staff and a pastor. [Focus Group Member #3]?

FGM #3: The, the last church I served at up in [State], I was a assigned our communications director to give her direct oversight and she was, was coming in late every day for the job. And so, you know, she would have, always have a good excuse and dropping off grandkids and, you know, and so I was empathetic as the pastor and as someone who likes to get along with people. But I said, you know, I need you to be here on time and, and if it isn't addressed, we're gonna have a different kind of conversation and, and I think the hard part is then she comes in a couple weeks later and she's really late getting in. I said that, you know, we need, I think we need to end, your employment here and just the, you know, it, it was awful. I mean, the, the, you know, you empathized with her on one side. So, she didn't maybe take, you take, take me as seriously as that I had authority to do the other thing. And so, at the end of the day, we ended with her, but I remember stepping into the office of a colleague right after that and, and saying, you know, that just, that just did not go well. And so, I, the I from that point on, I've always tried to wear the, make sure that the boss hat is understood as their employer, especially with staff members that, you know, I come in as their boss and not their pastor. So, I, I think I it's, it's a matter of emphasis. But I think it, it, there's an employer/employee relationship in there that at least with the staff of our size that it has to be clear. And, and clear lines of authority. So, I, I maybe move more towards the organizational side than the pastoral side on that. And if there's a pastoral piece, I might say, "Listen, I, I think it would be good for you to talk to somebody else." Yeah.

Vanessa: OK. As a follow-up question to that, have you ever had church members or volunteer leaders try to interfere in a situation where you have to correct, or even let go, a staff member?

FGM #2: I, I was just gonna ask, interfere in...?

Vanessa: Either object to it, take you to task for it. Uh, maybe even start gossip because of it, that type of thing because they maybe didn't understand what had happened and decided to second guess your decision really.

FGM #1: I, I can speak to that. And, and it's also happened in my previous pastor in [State]. There was a young man who, he has now gained national prominence as a musician. He's got albums out and stuff, but when he came to us, he was just getting started and I was trying to shift the church from being, you know, so traditional to kind of introducing some contemporary music to the church anyway, sort of similar to what [Focus Group Member #3] experienced. He kept coming in late, kept coming in late. Was not on time, was not on time for rehearsals, not on time and being in worship and we are paying him good money to be there. And so, you know, a decision had to be made to let him go and I was making that decision to let him go and I'm sharing this with our Music Committee and, oh boy! You know, the protests, the, the backlash that I received, you

know, you started us on this bent. Now you're getting rid of the one person, people are coming to the church. We need to make allowances. But I knew that if I allowed this to continue, it would set a bad precedent at the church. And so ultimately, I had to let him go and, you know, it, it caused a lot of pain internally for me, because I'm the one that was introducing this whole new concept of getting more contemporary with our music. People were starting to really gravitate to it. But in the end of the day, if the person is not doing what they're supposed to do, we had to cut them. But I to go through some, some challenging times, I'll just leave it at that with those who did not want to see this person go.

Vanessa: Thank you, A different question now: how do you sharpen your leadership abilities? [Focus Group Member #3], and then [Focus Group Member #4].

FGM #3: Some of, some of it is reading books on leadership. I'm actually, just as of the last week, searching out a coach as well. I'm looking for, for someone who can help me with my, my executive role as the senior pastor. My planning horizon is a little shorter than some of my colleagues and it's causing some frustration. And so just looking for some help in some, some ways that I can sharpen some of that up.

Vanessa: [Focus Group Member #4]?

FGM #4: I was gonna say I have a coach, I have a coach who is great because both pastorally and administratively really, you know, just this week we were in sort of a bizarre place and some, issues of compensation and all sorts of, and, and he having someone like that, that, that has known me long enough to understand the dynamics of the church, but it's completely out of, it really helps me with, with the vision and then within the church, one of our members is an HR VP at his company and he's really very helpful in, in terms of how to, to work with staff. But, but a lot of it is, is just having someone outside. For now, it's a coach, but I've always had someone who I could go to, who was outside of the church, but who understood churches enough and knew me well enough to really help me get through some, you know, some good times and some sticky times.

Vanessa: Either [Focus Group Member #1] or [Focus Group Member #2], would you like to, answer this question?

FGM #2: Yeah, I also have a coach.

Vanessa: OK.

FGM #1: Yeah, I, I don't have a coach but, I do have some folks that I count as mentors that I'm able to talk to, and sort of know my context of where I am and I'm able to talk to them about how to, to navigate certain things. I also read books as well. Books are, are good to stimulate the mind, but then mentors are great and also coaches because it gets closer to the context of where you are. So, I kind of use both.

Vanessa: Great. Thank you. I'm gonna switch gears. Now, we're going to talk a little bit about gender. This question, first question is, have you experienced, and this is for both men and women, have you experienced any stereotyping in your role as a pastor leader that you felt was related to your gender at? [Focus Group Member #4]?

FGM #4: Yes.

Vanessa: Can, can you, can you describe that?

FGM #4: You know, it's interesting because in terms of, you know, the church I was in for a while, was so utterly traditional that they actually had two women pastors. Me, I was, and the associate, we were both women, one of very unusual early nineties, but a woman minister before they had women ushers. So, there was certainly very clear understandings of what roles should be. But in terms of preaching and pastorally, it wasn't an issue, but there's been an assumption as broad-minded, particularly in terms of whether I'm capable administratively, but most significantly, the assumption that I don't understand money. I mean, it's, it's, it's very focused on, on facilities to some extent. But the assumption is, and it takes them a while for them to acknowledge that I may know more than they think I do. And I, I'm very open about what I don't know, but I think there's, there's very much a gender relationship and I think there are many other subtle ways, but the most glaring is the assumption that if I'm a woman, I can't possibly understand budgets or money.

FGM #2: Yeah, I, I would say, not so much the budgets and money thing but that leadership looks a certain way. That authority means of being bossy, you know, in that sort of classic way. And that you know, being, you know, encouraged to take, you need to just need to take charge.

FGM #4: Yes!

FGM #2: I have, I am in charge. But I'm not gonna, it's not gonna look the way you think. But I will say, yes, it just, just happened yesterday. I was walking back and I'd been out and about and we have a preschool at our church and the kids were out in front and one of the little girls who is out there is also from a church family and she was talking to her friend as I walked by and she said, "She's the one in charge," and the little girl was like, "What?" The little girl, she said, "Of the church." And I was like, "OK, then, well, at least the five-year old's got it."

FGM #4: I, I just have to echo [Focus Group Member #2]. You're, you're spot on that. That's exactly right.

Vanessa: OK, ladies. Gentlemen, I know that stereotyping that door swings both ways. Have you either of you experienced any stereotyping due to your gender?

FGM #1: Not, not due to gender, not in, in my past old experience. I, I've experienced it in other ways, you know, my age. And, and also my, my, my, my ethnicity but not, not gender. I, I, I have not experienced that.

Vanessa: [Focus Group Member #3]?

FGM #3: May, maybe the cutting two ways part is that the expectation is that I will be bossy and make the decisions, you know, and it's, that's just not how I roll either. So, I don't know, I, I would say probably not that but if, if it's anything, it's the expectation that I should you know, perhaps be more bossy as a man than I am. I don't know.

Vanessa: OK, the next question, have you ever felt that any type of stereotyping has led to discrimination?

FGM #1: Yes.

Vanessa: [Focus Group Member #1]?

FGM #1: Yes. So, I think I've been discriminated against in the pastoral position due to my age. The first church I was blessed to pastor, I came into that congregation, congregational context at the age of 28 going on 29. And everyone there, they were old enough to be my parents. And so, one, they chose me because of youth. But they thought because of pastoral inexperience that they could sort of rule me or, you know, do things, that, that were just, it's just wrong. One leader, I'll just leave it at that, came to me and said the words ,“You're hardheaded,” and “If you are my son, you know, you would not get away with this.” And I'm like, "Listen, I didn't come to be your son. I came to be your pastor.” And so, I had to really deal with a whole lot of things in that regard. So that's just one instance.

Vanessa: Anyone else?

FGM #3: We, we had a situation where we had to hire a new children's ministry director and we had always had someone who was a little bit older in that role for many years and, and the expectation was that we would find someone, you know, whose kids that were empty-nesters who had time and it came down to an interview, we had a 20-something who was just out of college and the amount of, of, you know, how, you know, "How could we ever hire this person? They won't know anything." You know, was some really deep conversations about it. But at the end of the day, despite all of that, we, we made the hire and put a lot of support behind her and she's, she's thrived. But, but it, it meant putting aside a whole lot of, you know, sort of age prejudice, against youth. And so, it's interesting, kind of cuts both ways, right? You, someone's too old or someone's too young. But you, we, we've had some issues on the other side of that with employees who have become less effective as they've gotten into their eighties. And, and we've also been worried about whether or not they can safely operate a, a vehicle and their liability if they get into an accident, if they're on the church's payroll. And so, we've had to sort of navigate the realistic part of that of, of the job expectations while trying to avoid the

ageist. You know, the idea that this is just ageism, right? So, both, I'd say the age thing has been the most, has the most potential for prejudice in some ways.

Vanessa: OK, [Focus Group Member #4]?

FGM #4: Early on, when I was in, in [City] and it was in the sort of the late eighties, there was a tradition that, Thanksgiving, there was interfaith Thanksgiving service the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving and each church had an opportunity to host the church. And my first year I came in September and that November, it was my church's turn to host the event and one of the churches wouldn't come because there was a woman minister presiding but the amazing thing is, serving on several committees and organizations with, with the pastor of that church. About two years later, he came up to me a year later and apologized and said, "I've learned so much in the last year, I'm sorry." And at the same time, so, so there was that learning. And then at the same time when we had an exchange with some Russians and the interfaith council got involved, the Archbishop of [City] allowed me to be in the chancel of the cathedral, which was extremely, if not disallowed, unexpected. So, it worked both ways. I mean, there were, there were two people ultimately opening up, but initially having some grave concerns about just about gender.

Vanessa: [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM #2: I'm thinking in our congregation, our church, our campus there, you know, we have a Spanish speaking congregation and also an Indonesian speaking congregation that, that are co-located here. They're, they're, they're independent, they're both Presbyterian, but they're not, they're separate congregations from us, they're not. And I have noticed among some of our members on occasion, you know, some very subtle, and not so subtle, racism in the relationships with those congregations. You know, for example, one year when we were getting ready to do VBS, someone suggested, "Oh, wouldn't it be a good idea if we provided some scholarships for the Spanish speaking church's kids to come to our VBS?" And we're like, "Well, why would they need scholarships?" So there was this sort of assumption that because of, they're part of a particular ethnic group that they would be poor and not be able to, you know, attend, or, just, some, some just assumptions that, you know, if they, if we, if we need the space that they usually use or something that we're doing that, well, of course, they will, they will vacate so that we can use it, kind of having to help people unpack, you know. Well, that, that what's that about? Why? Why would you assume that, that, that we get first dibs if they, they have an agreement with them that they can this space at this time. So that's just been an interesting thing to unpack, especially among the congregation that prides itself on being open-minded and progressive.

Vanessa: This next question, pardon me. This next question you answered a little bit, but I wanna dig just a little bit deeper. And that, do you think that there are specific gender-related strengths and gender-related weaknesses as it pertains to ministry?

FGM #3: That's a loaded question.

Vanessa: This is a safe space.

FGM #1: I think just in my context and in my experience that one of the things that drew me the here, to [my church] was the sheer number of men that were involved in ministry come out of previous context where it was overwhelmingly with the women doing everything. In fact, it was known if you wanted to get things done, you put it in the hands of, of the women because they knew how to get it done. But, one of the things I've learned here in the context of, of [Church Name] is that when called upon or when asked the men, stepped up wholeheartedly. Now, that's not to say that the women did not. But it is to say that there's a, it's a good balance here of men accomplishing things and women accomplishing things as well. Now, you know, we have had in the past in both contexts of the church I pastored in [State] and the one I pastor, we have had in the past where, you know, women were relegated to more administrative roles because it seems as if their strengths were there while men were relegated more to you know, labor, getting things done that type of deal around the church. But take pride in, in, in trying to dispel those myths and really trying to work across lines to show that there are men that can do that have administrative gifts and that there are ladies that can help and bring, you know, what is needed. So, we've, we've had some evidence of things in the past that where people have been labeled due to their gender. But we're trying our best and, and that's just the only way I can put it we're trying our best to dismiss that and dispel that here at [Church Name].

Vanessa: OK, thank you. Anybody else willing to give that one a go?

FGM #4: Was your question related to sort of the general things or to our own ministries or...?

Vanessa: However you, however you have perceived it. If there's strength and weaknesses because of gender within your own ministry or in general that you've experienced in ministry because it's kind of a two part.

FGM #3: So I, I would say that we, we have generally gravitated towards having women in the children's ministry area as the key leaders. We've never had a man in, in the leadership of the children's ministry area. We have had men as individual Sunday school teachers and, and nursery workers as well. But we've never had anybody in the role of children's ministry as a male that is, is leading the whole program. So I, I wonder if there's a bias there that in that on the youth side of things, we've discovered that we actually need a strong male and a strong female presence in both junior high and high school to balance each other's each other out. And so that kids of the of either gender have the opportunity to kind of talk about their stuff with someone who, who's like them. But, but in children's area, there is a, definitely I can see a bias.

Vanessa: [Focus Group Member #4]?

FGM #4: Well, since [Name] came to our church as our children's ministry leader, I guess we, we, we had that has not been ironically and in churches that tend to be our little

association sometimes more traditional. But I also, I guess, I think I'm bothered by the question only in the sense that in terms of our own ministries, I really see each of us despite how we may be perceived by the others as authentic people as we are. And I don't necessarily think that as a woman, I have a different skill set because I'm a woman as much as because I'm I am who I am. And, and so the idea that we're still asking that question, if we're asking about our own personal ministries, I think is, is unfortunate because it shouldn't be, it shouldn't even be a question.

Vanessa: I appreciate that. Any other responses? Yeah. Have you ever? OK, [Focus Group Member #4], you're not gonna like my next question then. Have you ever felt that a stereotype of some sort, gender or age, has actually gotten in the way of your interactions with your staff and with your volunteers? I think [Focus Group Member #1], you mentioned they didn't, they felt you were too young or too old? Did anyone else have a situation where they, some type of stereotype has gotten in the way?

FGM #4: I, I would just say the same thing I said before that in terms of particularly financial and issues, the assumptions of what I might or might not know.

Vanessa: Anyone else, [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM #2: I would say, when I arrived here, I've been here 17 years. So, when I arrived here, I was the first woman called as Head of Staff at this church. And at that time, my children were six and eight and I was hyper, hyper, worried that any hint that needing to, to do childcare or, you know, tending to my kids was going to make people say, "Aha, aha! I knew we shouldn't have hired a young woman as Head of Staff or younger woman as Head of Staff," that I think I overcompensated and I just didn't.

Vanessa: Can you say how you overcompensated?

FGM #2: I'm just trying to, you know, I would just, you know, I, I would have you know, just, you know, I would have done just about anything to avoid bringing my kids to, with me to a meeting or miss a day because a kid was home sick from, from work. And you know, so I think that was, that was overcompensating a bit. And so, you know, later on, when I've had colleagues, associate pastor, colleagues who were dads and were for whatever reason, you know, some sort of the on-call parent for the day or the week or the month and, and had, you know, their kids come with them. I, I find myself thinking I could never have gotten away with that. So, and sometimes been a bit resentful.

Vanessa: Ok. Thank you. I'm gonna switch gears now. I'd like to talk a little bit about conflict management and resolution. The question is, how do you handle conflict with your staff first? We'll talk about staff. How do you handle conflict when it arises? And can you give me an example?

FGM #1: I'll, I'll go. But like most of you, we have a personnel manual and in the manual, it talks about, you know, escalation of how things should go if, if things escalate. So, if there's one incident, then it gets reported, if there are two incidents around the same

area, then there's a consult that takes place conversation, three incidents, you know, around the same thing or, or area. Then we, we talk about certain things as I stated before. [State]'s an at will state. So, we can dismiss without, you know, cause, but we try to give folks who are here an opportunity to work through something. So, if it's, if it's something dealing with another employee, we have had that instance before, we have tried to find ways to bring resolution and we have escalated it where it needed to be. So, it started with the immediate supervisor and it only has come up to my level when it's everything else has been exhausted. So, we try to follow what, what we have outlined in our booklet and, and keep it at that. Uh, but we have had to terminate, some people based upon the fact that we could not find ways to, to bring any peaceful, I'll put it that way, peaceful resolution to the issues.

Vanessa: Ok. Anyone else? [Focus Group Member #3]?

FGM #3: I think if you, if part, part of it for, from our end is making sure that we have clear job descriptions to begin with. And, and regular, regular meetings with staff members with clear lines of authority between supervisor and, and employee so that gaps are identified early. And not so that things don't escalate to the point where you've got a real big problem. I think that's one of the ways that we, we avoid conflict is by making sure that everybody has clarity about what they're doing and we, we can see where the gaps are fairly quickly. In the case of places where people have expectations that are that, that they're not fulfilling, I think it's, it's coming, you know, it's meeting with them early on and with the problem and saying he identifying the gap, identifying the problem trying to find a place where, how are you going to address it? Where's the plan? So, I think about this elderly employee where, you know, I, I walked out with her to her car, she wanted to continue to work. I said, I, the personnel committee is concerned about liability with your driving. I said, let's go and look at your car and multiple dents, from multiple accidents. I said, you know, she says I can get those fixed. I said the worry is that you could mow somebody down, you know, and then we had, you know, and then we got angry, just got angry. And I said, you know, the fact is we have to, we have to do this for the sake of the church. And so, there was anger there and there was fear, but it was it was let, let's find a way to, to find let's find a way towards a soft landing if we can. And I think that was the goal. It didn't completely work out the way we would have wanted. But it was, I, I think addressing it squarely knowing what the gap is.

Vanessa: OK. [Focus Group Member #2]?

FGM #2: I would say pretty key is being be, be aware of when you're getting triangulated into a conflict and recognize that it's happening and, and then decide your strategy to, to either, you know, real, you know, own that and, and, and just be aware that that's what's happening or extract yourself from the triangle. That happens a lot, I would say in such conflicts, one church member will come and report to you the terrible things that the other one has done and vice versa and, you know, just trying to get you triangulated into whatever's going on between the two.

Vanessa: OK. It's the same question now. But now it's with your volunteer leaders. How do you manage conflict with your volunteer leaders?

FGM #4: What kind of conflict, mean... us?

Vanessa: With you directly with staff or with each other within the leadership.

FGM #4: I think what the one thing that comes into mind is one of our staff. I mean, they're always, they, they, they feel big at the time and you look back, they may seem small, but at the time, they were big, there was a big argument about which Christmas tree was gonna go into which room in the, in our office, which is a house. And so, one of our staff people yelled at the volunteer and said to me, "I've just had it with her," and I basically said, I mean, it was pretty direct and I just said, "As a staff person, you simply do not talk to our church members that way." I mean, I think that, that, that's been in terms of staff and volunteers. It's mostly the experience I've had most recently is calming the staff down to not be nasty to the volunteers who may or may not, and then I will, if necessary, make sure that we can solve the problem. We just had the, the other day. So, it's, it's a matter of getting the people together. But I do think that, and I really feel strongly that as a church, our staff has to be more with volunteers, more, more gentle than they might be with coworkers if they were staff. And it's just to me that's been an issue is that staff gets frustrated with the volunteers for good reason or not. And their behavior is inappropriate. And that to me is, is something that I have to call out.

Vanessa: Ok. Anyone else like to chime in on this question? [Focus Group Member #3]?

FGM #3: I could say it's often. I give you an example where a few years ago we had a, we have a very assertive lady who helps lead some of the choir, social events and she wanted to have the Christmas tea in the place where the contemporary service would, was rehearsing for Christmas Eve. And she figured the choir was more important than this group of young people who were just, you know, playing rock music. I mean, completely, you know, a complete lack of understanding what was what was happening over there, what I'd call competing values, competing groups looking for the same space. Without seeing all the dynamics in play. I was like, well, yeah, of course, the choir can use that space without realizing that the, you know, all of the needs of the folks that needed to rehearse, they needed that space, they needed sound people there to do it all. And so, at the end of the day, it ended up being about me mediating, meeting with all the parties separately and then bringing it to the elders to say, "Hey, we have a conflict here. I'm trying to resolve it. Here's, here's an idea. I would love for the elders to ultimately make this call." And so, in some ways, it was passing the buck. But, but I think part of the process was, did the parties get, did they feel heard? And, and could you ultimately make a decision? Who, who should make the decision? The question is, I could have made the decision. But I think it would have cost me a lot with either group in some way. But when the elders weighed in on it, it was like it took it, it took it off of me as the, the one, the decider as it were.

Vanessa: And did you come to resolution?

FGM #3: We did. Yeah. The, it was clear that the ministry needs over were more important than the social needs of the choir. The choir could do their, their thing in another part of the building. It was, it was fine but strong personalities.

Vanessa: OK, great. Thank you. Anyone else with respect to volunteers and conflict? OK. So, our last question and this has gone, well, we're pretty much on time. Would have been a little longer if our other volunteer had joined us, but the last question is going to come as a polling question. And so, I'm gonna have Danielle launch that poll and take your time to read it. And what you're gonna be asked to do is to rank these four areas. What you think is most important for a first-time solo pastor or a first-time Head of Staff to learn in what order they should learn: this first, this second, this third, this fourth. OK. We just have one more that we're waiting for and there we go. OK. All have answered. You can end the poll. Danielle, can you share these results?

Danielle: Would you like me to read them out loud?

Vanessa: Yes, please.

Danielle: OK. So, for the first question of “interviewing, hiring, and training”, 1 participant, put that as numero uno, 1 put it as three, and half of the group, 2 people, put it as actually fourth of importance. For "delegating tasks and accountability", we have 3 of the participants, so 75%, placed it as number one and 1 participant placed it as number three. For "conflict management and resolution", 3 of the participants put it at number two and 1 put it as number four. And for "understanding the basics of church finance", we're missing one answer here, but we have 1 person placed it as number two, 2 people put it in third place.

Vanessa: OK. Thank you. You can close them. OK. First of all. I want to thank each and every one of you that took me to the end of my questions. But before I close our time together, is there anything that any of you would want to share related to any of my questions that kind of popped into your head after the fact that you would like now would now like an opportunity to share. Not seeing anyone raise their hand. So that's fine. I want to thank you very much again for your participation today. I appreciate your time, I appreciate your honesty and I am going to I think I will ask [Focus Group Member #1], will you close us in a word of prayer?

FGM #1: Yeah. Sure, sure. Let's pray. Gracious God, we come down to the conclusion of this time together and open and honest discussion as it relates to context of ministry, I pray God that as we have heard one another and as Vanessa is finishing her project that this would be beneficial and useful for someone to hear, read, and know. Bless us in our prospective ministries and bless us as we leave this Zoom, in your name, we pray. Amen.

Various: Amen.

Appendix I: Training in Church Administration Workbook

WHAT I WISH I HAD LEARNED IN SEMINARY

A Guide for the Development of Administrative Skills for Pastors

By
Vanessa Bates

In Partial Fulfillment of her Doctor of Ministry Project
New York Theological Seminary

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Vanessa Bates
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Table of Contents

Introduction....1

Section I – Where Do I Begin?....4

Job Descriptions for Employees....4
- Elements of a Good Job Description – Paid Staff....4
- Why Is It Important?....6
- How and When Will You Utilize and Revise This?....8
- How Do We Apply This to Volunteers?....8

Interviewing Strategies in the Hiring Process....11
- Interview Questions....12
- Interview Format....12
- Should I Interview My Volunteers - How Is This Different?....13
- Cautions for the Interview and Selection Process....14

Keys to Their Success for Both Paid Staff and Volunteers....16
- Onboarding and Training for Paid Staff....16
- Volunteer Orientation and Training....18
- Setting Reasonable Goals for Paid Staff and Volunteers....18
- One-to-Ones....20

Conclusion....21

Examples
- Example Job Description....22
- Example Volunteer Application....24
- Example Interview Form/Grid....26

Section II – The Art of Delegation and Accountability....29

Delegation....30
- Delegation - When, What, and How....31
- How Is It Different for Volunteers?....35

Accountability....36
- Course Corrections....37
- Feedback....37
- Progressive Corrections/Discipline....39
- Terminations....42
- Reviews....44
- Components of a Review....45

Conclusion....47

Examples
- Example Employee Counseling....49
- Example Discipline Correction/Warning....50

- Example Notice to Employee as to Change in Relationship 51
- Example Review 52
- Example Accountability Cycle 53

Section III – Conflict Management and Resolution 54

- How We View Conflict 54
- Types of Conflict and Our Own Biases 57
- Constructive versus Destructive Conflict 60
- Our Physiology, Background, and Experience - The Impact on Conflict 61
- Conflict Between You as the Pastor-Leader and Paid Staff/Volunteer Leaders 65
- Conflict Between Staff Members/Volunteer Leaders 68
- When to Confront and Take Action 70
- When to Let a Conflict Go 72

Conclusion 73

Section IV – The Basics of Church Finances 75

Taxation for Non-Profits (Churches) 501(c)(3) 76
Fund Accounting 78
- The Balance Sheet and How to Understand It 80
- What to Look For in the Balance Sheet 81
- Income Statements 81
- What to Look For in the Income Statements 82

Financial Controls 83
Budgets 85
- Zero-Based Budgets 85
- Line-item Budgets 85
- Ministry Action Budget 86

Stewardship 87
Conclusion 89

Examples
- Example Balance Sheet 90
- Example Income Statement 91
- Example Designated Fund Statement 93
- Example Budget 94

Bibliography 95

Introduction

As you read this guide, you may wonder why I am writing on the mundane topic of church administration. The answer comes from my own observations in working with pastors, my reading about the struggle pastors have with many administration tasks, and the necessity of knowing how to lead in this area. It may surprise you to learn that back in 2012, a survey within the PCUSA found that administrative tasks take up over 25% of the time a pastor spends during his/her week, and this percentage does not include issues dealing with hiring or conflict.[1] In speaking to many pastors from a variety of denominations, I found that today, that percentage is likely to be greater than 40% as the financial availability to hire staff and the reduction in people volunteering has placed an even greater burden on pastors. In a Lifeway research poll taken in 2022, 43% of pastors felt they needed to shore up their administrative skill set.[2] Unfortunately, it is also true that very few seminaries offer courses in administrative leadership as evidenced by both my surveys and a review of the courses currently offered at the larger seminaries in the U.S.

But with that said, it is also true that the "job" of a pastor-leader is not like that of a leader in the secular world of business. The calling to be a pastor is a vocational calling from God to lead in the Church Universal such that God's Kingdom message of hope, love, grace, mercy, and salvation is carried throughout the world. Eugene Peterson, in his memoir *Pastor*, says this:

> "But a vocation is not a job in that sense. I can be hired to do a job, paid a fair wage if I do it, dismissed if I don't. But I can't be fired to be a pastor for my primary responsibility is not to the people I serve but to the God I serve."[3]

This vocation, this calling, requires a different mindset when it comes to the administrative leadership of the church. These relationships are sacred ones, relationships of a covenantal nature versus strictly a work relationship. Rendle and Beaumont, in their book, *When Moses Meets Aaron,* speak about the covenantal nature of our relationship with God as the

[1] Joelle Kopacz, "Go Figure," https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wpcontent/uploads/dec12_gofigure.pdf (accessed May 10, 2023).

[2] Lifeway Research Staff, "Video: Learning the Skills you need to Pastor," Lifeway Research.com https://research.lifeway.com/2022/06/23/video-learning-the-skills-you-need-to-pastor/ (accessed June 2, 2023).

[3] Eugene H. Peterson, *Pastor* (New York, NY: Harper One, 2011), 165.

foundation for our relationship with those in our congregation and with those whom we supervise.[4]

So how should this impact our relationship for those under our charge; how does this intersect with our responsibilities to be a good employer, following all the requisite legal guidelines while maintaining our authenticity as a pastor? When does the sacred, covenantal relationship surpass the employment relationship? When are they the same and when are they different?

All of these are important questions I hope to address within each section of this guidebook. I would like to say that the answers are always very straightforward, but they are not. In a few cases, will you find it easier to make a decisive, necessary, and quick employment decision. But most of the time, you will find yourself on that high-wire, balancing between being a pastor and a supervisor. The failure of a work relationship often ends in termination, but the failure of a broken covenantal relationship could end in creating a perceived wedge between you, as the supervisor, the staff or volunteer, and the unity of the relationship with God at the helm. I know that sounds frightening and in some respects it is. But the administration of God's church done consistently, thoughtfully, and godly is possible. At times you will triumph and at times you will fail, but if God is at the center of your relationship with staff and volunteers, and if you are willing to acknowledge your strengths and your weaknesses and how they impact these same relationships, you will find more success than failure. How can I be so sure you may ask?

I have found myself in both positions – leading as a business woman and leading as a bi-vocational lay pastor. The more I have integrated God into the equation of both of these areas, the better leader I have become. Scripture are replete with examples of leadership successes and failures. The Old Testament gives us examples of how the Israelites were formed into a nation under a covenant with God but lead by people - people like Moses, Joshua, David, and the prophets. Some were good leaders and many were failed leaders.

The New Testament gives us a picture of the Church under the new covenant established by Jesus. We read of the development of church offices in the book of Acts, and leadership challenges in the epistles of Paul. Within the teachings of Paul, we read of the spiritual gifts that each of us possess, graciously bestowed upon us by God in order to carry out the ministries of

[4] Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007), 25.

the church. John Tyson, in his book *Administration in the Small Membership Church,* talks about the synergy that exists between God's call to ministry, God's equipping us for ministry, and the desire to provide the gifts we need to fulfill all aspects of that call.[5] As pastor-leader, we should rely on these God-given gifts but also seek ways to inform and improve upon our knowledge of all aspects of this vocation, including administration.

Part of understanding the subtle differences between sacred versus secular leadership is an examination of your motives and your natural tendencies. J. Oswald Sanders, in his book *Spiritual Leadership,* offers this chart to compare the subtle differences in leadership:[6]

Natural	**Spiritual**
Self-confident	Confident in God
Knows people	Knows God
Makes own decision	Seeks to find God's will
Ambitious	Self-effacing
Originates own methods	Finds and follows God's methods
Enjoys commanding others	Delights to obey God
Motivated by personal considerations	Motivated by God and love for humanity
Independent	God-dependent

We will at times lead from the first column, but if we can humble ourselves within our positions of authority, we will learn to lead from the second column.

All of this is to say that you should allow scripture to guide you in seeking examples of successful leadership in the selection process, delegation, accountability, conflict resolution and the oversight of church finances. And then pray, pray, pray. God is our ultimate leader and guide. I pray for you that God grants you the wisdom and discernment you need as you grow your administrative skill set.

[5] John H. Tyson, *Administration in the Small Membership Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 6.

[6] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1967), 38.

Section I – Where Do I Begin?

When you enter into your role as a solo pastor or head of staff, you will need to understand what policies have been created, as either required by your polity or by those who came before you (or some combination). Given this is the 21st century, unless you are a new church plant, it is very likely that certain policies and procedures have been established and codified in the form of an operations manual. As part of your job orienting yourself to your congregation and staff, you should read it. I know it sounds like a boring, laborious task and it likely will be. But if you do not know what has been guiding the administration of the church prior to your arrival, you will not know what is good and should be kept, what is missing and needs to be developed, and what is simply outdated and needs to be discarded. You may also have a personnel committee or a specific human resources volunteer or staff person that will be directly involved in this process, so you should make sure you have spoken to them and that you clearly understand their role. If their role is not already codified in written form, you will want to do this as part of establishing job descriptions.

Now assuming you have done the above, I would suggest you spend time carefully reviewing the job descriptions, again assuming they exist, for all of your staff. You may or may not have job descriptions for key volunteers positions but this would also be important and a good second step of your own orientation process. While I could write a significant amount on how to negotiate your own position, that is not the purpose of this guide. In order for you to be an effective pastor-leader in the area of administration, you need to have good job descriptions for all of those who are under your employ as well as volunteers who can impact the mission and vision of your church. And this is where we shall begin.

Job Descriptions for Employees

Job descriptions are an important element in assisting you in the supervision of both staff and volunteers. There are several key elements that make for a good job description for paid staff. We will examine these first and then move to volunteers and discuss how they differ.

<u>Elements of a Good Job Description – Paid Staff :</u>

- Job Title/Position – Administrative Assistant, Director of Music, etc.
- FLSA Classification – Is this position exempt (salaried) or non-exempt (hourly)

- Effective Date – Date the work will commence
- Job Summary or Purpose – This is a brief overall description of the job
- Organizational Reporting – To whom will this person report
- Essential Functions – Listing of the major duties - should be eight to twelve items
- Other Duties or Responsibilities – Minor items like participate in meetings
- Qualifications – I would suggest separating education and experience from knowledge, abilities, and skills - items that can be demonstrated
- Physical Requirements – Lifting, public speaking, driving, etc.
- Signatures of both the employee and either the direct supervisor, or if you have a Human Resource person, their signature

An example of a job description can be viewed at the end of this chapter, but let's examine what we mean by some of these terms.

Every state in this country will be bound by the rules found in the Fair Labor Standards Acts (FLSA) which sets out the minimum requirements for wage, overtime, hours worked, record keeping, and child labor. However, each state also has standards/requirements that are often greater than what is found within the FLSA. Please check your state requirements as you will be bound by both. In addition, there are many laws that impact churches so please make sure you consult with your governing body or an HR expert to confirm your overall compliance to all state and federal mandates.

In terms of the Job Summary/Purpose statement, while it may seem obvious, it should reflect, in general terms, the overall essential functions and other duties of this position. When writing it, think about the following items:

- Why does this job exist and is it essential?
- Is this statement short and concise and does it use action verbs?
- Are you just repeating the essential functions or other duties?
- Is this written so that others can understand it?

The next portion, Essential Functions, is the most critical part of the job description. When you are designing the essential functions, think about what action is required, what outcome will come from this action, and who it may include or impact. You may want to think in terms of what are the key performance indicators (KPIs) to be successful in this job. This will be helpful when it comes time to perform a job review. These essential functions should all start

with an action verb of some type, i.e. plans, directs, coordinates, trains, organizes, assists, contributes, etc. You may want to list these in order of importance and they should be so essential to the job that it may be difficult for someone else, without the training and experience, to replicate. I would suggest that you have eight to ten, but no more than twelve.
Important note - The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) look at essential functions when determining compliance with these federal statutes. Again, a warning that each state may have more stringent requirements than what exists federally, and those will supersede the federal requirements.

The "Other Duties and Responsibilities" section would include the participation in meetings, perhaps annual planning retreats, budgeting or similar events, and coordination that involves other portions of the church or other committees. This section will vary from job to job as some jobs will have supervisory functions within them and some will not.

When it comes to the Necessary Qualifications, I would recommend separating out the education/training component from the knowledge, skills, and abilities. While they are definitely interconnected, you may find that an individual has the appropriate education but no experience or the opposite. You must decide how flexible you are willing to be in this area. The knowledge, skills, and abilities are usually items that have been learned over time, but are necessary for this particular job. Again, think of these in terms of demonstratable actions.

The last section, Physical Demands, is a statement that helps in meeting both the ADA and EEOC requirements and should be included in every paid job description including that of the pastor. In addition, I recommend adding the last paragraph that simply states this job description is not exhaustive and other functions/duties may be assigned or revised as needed.

Why Is It Important?

You have created or reviewed the job descriptions for your paid staff, but you may be asking yourself why is this so important? When we think back over the scriptures, we can find many times when each of the portion of a job description was instituted to solve a need or problem. While they do not look exactly like this document, we can see the essence of the need and the solution provided. Remember all the way to the Book of Exodus when the task of judging the people was becoming too much for Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro, wisely advised him to pick individuals who could assist in this task, leaving the most important

judgments to Moses (Exodus 18:13-26). Think about the Book of Acts, when the church was expanding and the disciples needed to assign responsibilities to others. The appointment of the positions of deacons (Acts 6) and elders/overseers (Acts 14) is described within these verses. In the book of 1 Timothy, we have additional descriptors as well as a charge to Timothy. The roots of how we design our job descriptions is biblical, but it is how we utilize these that can impact our overall relationships with those under our employ.

Remember that discussion of the difference between strictly an employment relationship and a covenantal relationship? Having a clear picture of job functions and expectations, for both you and your paid staff, will better enable you to balance on that fulcrum of sacred versus secular. A good job description will provide the basis for reviewing performance. It will provide the basis for creating goals as well as monitoring how well the essential functions are matching up with the goals which will be discussed in the last section on the keys to success. As we close this section, I would like to mention several thoughts on whether paid staff should be members of the church or not.

There are two sides to this decision to have paid staff as church members. Several executive pastors that I interviewed felt very strongly that most staff positions like administrative assistants, youth ministry, music directors, and even financial administrators should be held by church members. Their argument was these individuals, as church members, will be more likely to align with the overall mission and vision of the church thereby working in concert with the pastor-leader to achieve these goals. The challenge to this comes when you need to correct, discipline, or terminate an individual. If often leads to that person exiting the church. Conversely, if you hire only from outside of the congregation, the accountability side of managing is easier but they may not be as vested in the success of the organization. I would suggest something that is more in the middle. Certain positions, like youth ministry, are probably better served by someone who is either a member of your church or a member of your denomination whereas your financial administrator will likely have specialized training or education, but would not necessarily need to be a member to effective. Each church and each position can be argued both ways and it will ultimately be a strategic decision you will make in concert with your leadership team.

How and When Will You Utilize This and Revise It?

To begin any process of hiring or reviewing paid staff, you must have a basis from which to work. This is the function of a well-written job description. This will assist you in listing an ad, creating appropriate interview questions, determining wage ranges, hours, who will be impacted by this person, etc. The entire personnel management cycle of hiring, training, reviewing, and correcting starts with the job description.

The next question to ask yourself is how often should it be reviewed and revised? The answer is it depends. I know that is vague, but let me explain. If the job duties/hours are expanded or changed, you should review and revise the job description. The same holds true if the duties are combined into another position, or reduced for some reason. If none of this is true, you should review and revise, if necessary, no less than annually. Churches, just like secular businesses, are in a state of on-going change and with the advancement of technology, the rate of change is accelerating. While we may wish to remain comfortable in stasis, that is not and, I would say, should not be the nature of church. We are called into a mission field that requires adaptation. This does not mean following cultural whims, but it does mean keeping abreast of changes in the law, changes in the nature of culture, and societal needs. In the reformed faith, we speak of reformed and always reforming. This does not mean reforming to the ways of the world and giving up or modifying biblical truths, but it does mean being open to change, not so much in what we believe but in how we choose to express those beliefs. And this applies just as much to the administrative leadership of the church. Embracing helpful technology is good, but it should not be a substitute for in-person relationships.

How Do We Apply This to Volunteers?

Managing volunteers can a challenging part of a pastor-leader's job as these individuals are most likely to be members of your congregation and as such, they have an established relationship with you as their pastor. However, volunteers are a valuable human resource and often a key in getting many church-related tasks accomplished. Unfortunately, Covid had a negative impact on the ability to recruit volunteers. An article in *Christianity Today* cited Gallup poll statistics showing a continued downward trend in volunteering with "35 percent of

Americans reported volunteering for a religious organization last year, down from 38 percent in 2020 and 44 percent in 2017."[7] And within this same article, the author cites from Lifeway Research the following:

> "Pastors listed committed volunteers among the biggest needs for their churches. Over three quarters of US pastors said they were concerned about developing leaders and volunteers, as well as people's apathy and lack of commitment. Over two-thirds said training current leaders and volunteers was a concern."[8]

There are no easy answers to this concerning drop in volunteers as it may require a significant personal effort on the part of the pastor to encourage a re-entry into volunteering. It is very likely that a restructuring of what is expected from your volunteers may be necessary to ease the burden and time commitment. For example, and depending on your governing structure, you may choose to have your volunteer leaders put in a team situation. At our church, we restructured our Session, which is made up of twelve elders, into teams of two elders. Each has some individual responsibilities, but also has someone else to help carry the load. The problem of recruitment and retention is real and not likely to go away. But we also know that many find great fulfillment in their giving of their time and talents to the needs of the church. Every church, depending on its size, will have many opportunities and needs for volunteers. So the question remains how do you recruit these people and how do you provide oversight to make sure the volunteer is executing the job?

Part of the answer lies in your governance structure. Depending on your denomination, you will have volunteers that will be categorized as leaders and must be formally nominated, voted upon, and even ordained. Some will have the same or similar requirements as the pastors, while others will be strictly volunteers without formal theological training. It is these unpaid volunteers that are our focus as most churches rely heavily on volunteers. As the body of Christ, we are called into service, each and every one of us, in some capacity or another. If we look at the origins of the early church, we see that they only had the laity and it was not until centuries later dedicated positions, such as clergy, became a reality. Laity is the lifeblood of a church so

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[7] Kate Shellnutt, "Church Leaders Are Still Waiting for Volunteers to Come Back," *Christianity Today,* January, 2022, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/january/church-ministry-volunteer-gallup-survey-lifeway-wr.html/ (accessed June 15, 2023).

[8] Ibid.

we, as pastor-leaders, need to learn how to better mine these resources. I would like to suggest we treat volunteer positions with a greater regard. I will even be so bold as to suggest we utilize a volunteer application form. You will find an example of this at the end of this section.

If you are well-established in your position, you may find it harder to get your existing, long-term members to complete a volunteer application form. If, on the other hand, you are new to your position, this can be used as a method to get to know the members of your congregation. The form itself is fairly simple and asks basics questions like, "What skills/experience/education do you have that you would like to use in your volunteer work?" You might want to ask about availability in terms of days of the week or months of the year or both. You might want to ask about transportation or physical limitations as well as asking about general areas of interest within the programs of the church. If you can create a database of this information, it will make recruiting for specific positions easier. Remember to include all levels of tasks as many people will start volunteering tentatively and when they encounter success and affirmation as well as spiritual fulfillment, they may be willing to try another opportunity.

The most difficult part of managing volunteers is managing volunteers. You, as the pastor-leader, will be quickly overwhelmed if you are trying to manage all of the various volunteer areas. You may need paid staff or specifically trained leaders for this. In the PCUSA church, we have Elders and Deacons as volunteer leaders. Elders are often tasked with a specific area of oversight and then recruit and manage their volunteers. Deacons are similarly tasked but with not as heavy a load. Imagine if they had access to a database of information that would allow them to target their volunteers.

I would also suggest that each major leadership area have a "job description" per se. It should have a purpose statement and essential functions. This will not only help in the recruitment of individuals to fill these positions, but it will help you and your staff monitor how well they are performing in this volunteer role. While you can terminate paid staff, terminating a volunteer can be fraught with landmines and personal pastoral challenges. All the more reason why the selection process should be taken seriously. Orientation, training, evaluation and recognition of your volunteers will be discussed in the third section under "Key to their Success".

Interviewing Strategies in the Hiring Process

Now that you have reviewed or created your job descriptions, you may find yourself needing to make a new hire. That job description will be the basis for how you should write the ad, review resumes or curriculum vitae (CVs – normally used for someone with specific academic or professional credentials), and create the list of interview questions. As a church, this should be as much a spiritual endeavor as a practical one. I believe we all wish we had a prophet like Samuel - that God would speak to and tell us, through that prophet, who to select. Unfortunately, we do not, but we do have the ability to pray to God and ask God to give us a spirit of discernment when it comes to the hiring process – both for paid staff and for volunteers. Rendle and Beaumont, in their book *When Moses Meets Aaron*, state it succinctly:

> "Selecting leadership for the church is a sacred task. Throughout Scripture God continually has something to say about the selection of leaders. The hiring process is the beginning of a new relationship between a prospective employee and your congregation. What could be more sacred? As such, the hiring process should be grounded in prayer, and those who participate in the hiring process need to be actively involved in discernment."[9]

Unfortunately, I have found that the interview process is often done in an ad hoc way with no formality or structure around the questions, and certainly little involvement with God. As pastor-leaders, while we do have practical responsibilities like hiring, we should never forget about the nature of the covenantal relationships that we will enter and exit throughout our vocational life.

Keeping that in the forefront of your decision process, you can make this process more efficient and effective if you follow a structured format utilizing an interview template or grid and a scoring system. While this may sound like the opposite of anything sacred, it will actually help you from allowing your own biases to override thoughtful and thorough decisions. Using a form/grid system with the same basic questions allows you to easily compare candidates as well as compare scores with others that may be interviewing with you. An example of this form can be found at the end of this section, but let's examine what this could look like and how you might utilize it.

[9] Rendle and Beaumont, *Moses,* 73.

Interview Questions

The format/creation of your questions should be a combination of what are known as traditional interview questions which are generated from the resume or CV. Traditional questions would be: “Tell me about your current responsibilities,” or “How have they changed over time?,” or “What do you see as your strengths and/or weaknesses?”. The next set of questions will depend on the position - situational questions which are hypothetical, and behavioral questions which focus on how a candidate responded or behaved in a past situation.[10] An example of a hypothetical question would be “If a congregational member is angry about a situation, how would you handle it?”. Now compare this to a behavioral question such as “Have you ever had a situation where a congregational member or staff member, customer, etc. was angry over a situation and how did you handle it?” I would also encourage you to ask them why they are seeking a new opportunity. You might be able to find out information that you will not be able to get in a reference check.

I would normally suggest starting with traditional interview questions and move to either hypothetical or behavioral or a combination. I prefer behavioral in this part of the interview as it will require the candidate to give examples of how they responded to a variety of situations in their previous positions. These questions should be based on what you anticipate could arise in the performance of their job at your church. I always recommend more than one person conduct the interview. Depending on the importance of the position, it could be done in a series of interviews or you could have several people in one interview each tasked with asking specific, pre-determined questions. Allow for follow-up questions that may arise from a candidate’s answer to any given question, particularly behavioral-based questions.

Interview Format

As you prepare for the interview, I would make the following recommendations. First, review and discuss the resume or CV, second, fill out the interview template/grid (see example at the end of this section), and third, decide who is going to ask what questions. On the day of the interview, you may want to consider a structure similar to the following:

[10] Ibid, 83-85.

Part I – 5-7 minutes

- Introductions – introduce yourself and your position and any others joining you.
- Give some background information on your church and the nature of the job.
- Explain how you will conduct the interview process.

Part II – 30-45 minutes

- Begin by asking your traditional type questions.
- Follow this by asking the hypothetical and/or behavioral-based questions.
- Allow time for follow-up questions based on the answers above.
- Allow the candidate to do the majority of the talking – you and your team should be listening and note-taking.

Part III – 5- 10 minutes

- Allow the candidate to ask you questions. If the candidate has no questions, you should take that as a warning that they did little-to-no investigatory work prior to the interview. You want candidates to have shown some initiative such that they have viewed your website or read reviews. A great question from a candidate would be "What are my opportunities for growth in this position?". This tells you that this candidate is looking for growth and in turn, may want to help you grow in your church's mission and vision.

Part IV – 5 minutes

- Thank the candidate for their time.
- If you feel that this is good candidate, **sell** the position.
- Communication next steps, i.e. background checks, reference checks, etc.
- Let them know when they can expect to hear back from you. Do not "ghost" your candidates. Have the courtesy to tell them if they will not be a good fit.

Should I Interview My Volunteers – How Is This Different?

Within the bounds of your ministry, you will need and want to encourage volunteerism. As the Body of Christ, we are called to work together, each with our own gifts, to fulfill the greater mission of the Church – making disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). As previously stated, recruiting volunteers has been increasingly difficult, so perhaps the idea of interviewing a volunteer seems off-putting to both you, as a pastor-leader, and the volunteer. But if we want our volunteers to be successful and fulfilled in their volunteer positions, and depending on the level of responsibility, we should consider a type of interview process. I would not suggest interviewing your volunteers in the same, formal way you would a potential employee, but have a discussion with them based on the volunteer application they completed. This may guide you in determining if they are a good fit for a given volunteer position. You may have certain

requirements for volunteer leaders. For example, elders, deacons, board of trustees, etc., depending upon the governance structure of your denomination or if not affiliated then your own bylaws, may require that they be a member, or pass a background check, or some combination.

Interviewing volunteers should be less formal and may be accomplished either on the telephone or in-person. You should have their application in front of you and ask questions that are related either to their experience or their expressed desire. For example, “I noticed that you have been involved in many mission activities both within our church and outside of our church. Do you feel drawn to mission and can you tell me what excites you about mission work?” The wording of the question validates their interest and experience and allows them to express to you why they may be interested in mission work. A follow up question might be something like, “If we provided you some training, can you see yourself as a chairperson for our mission programs?” Now it is likely they will ask you what that would require, both in terms of time and talent. You should have a solid job description created for this volunteer-leader position so you can answer their question and provide a copy. Often people will be reluctant to say yes to a leadership position as they may feel inadequate. It is critical that you offer a solid training program, mentoring, pairing, or something similar to this type of individual so that they are properly oriented to this role and understand your expectations. We will discuss a bit more in the next section.

It will be helpful for both you and your volunteers to know that they are protected under the Charitable Immunity and Liability Act of 1987 Volunteer Protection Act. Your church must have liability insurance in place for this to apply. It will not protect a volunteer against willful or wanton negligence or sexual or discriminatory misconduct. Your volunteers should know this information and depending on the nature of their interaction with minors, should be formally trained on sexual harassment/misconduct and a copy of the training should be kept with the churches files. In some states, like California, new laws have been enacted to protect minors and require churches to have a deep background check that includes a Livescan (fingerprint scanning). Make sure you check what your state requires in this regard.

Cautions for the Interview and Selection Process

I want to provide you with a few words of caution in the interview process. In many states, you are prohibited from asking questions related to gender, marital status, children, and

other personal data. With that said, sometimes this information can be helpful to know, so you might want to consider asking a broad-based question like, “What do you like to do when you are not working?” Often, this will lead to a response about lifestyle which can guide you if you feel that would be either a benefit or an impediment to success in the job.

You should be aware of your own gender-based biases. Do not make assumptions based upon traditional gender roles. I would suggest you do not use older titles like “secretary” as it may imply a certain gender. Instead, use a title like “administrative assistant” as it is gender-neutral job title. While I won’t make the argument in this document for biblical bases for women in all leadership roles, you may find you are constrained by denominational polity.

In addition to these cautions, be careful not to fall victim to infatuation due to common interests. For example, you ask the general question about what they like to do on their time off and they say, “Well, I love to spend time with my two dogs.” Now maybe you have dogs and you start asking about what kind of dogs and common “dog” ground is created. You may find yourself liking this individual because you have so much in common instead of staying focused on their ability to properly and successfully execute the essential functions of the job. While this may seem obvious and simplistic, it happens all too frequently so awareness is important.

Pay attention to body language – both yours and the person you are interviewing. Are they distracted, not making good eye contact, or seem put off by your questions. Conversely, are you communicating interest with these same signals? Caution is warranted as those who are very introverted or neuro-divergent may express a body language or gesture that is not indicative of what they are thinking or feeling. Sensitivity and intuition are needed in these circumstances.

One final caution as we finish this section on interviews. I want to caution you on how you may think about educational credentials. The United States, to a great degree, has become obsessed with college degrees as a basic requirement, and advanced degrees for supervisory roles. Now as someone who has three degrees and is pursuing my fourth, my advice may sound contradictory but it comes from years of business experience. A degree is like the framing of a house, it provides a structure upon which you can build. But to be a finished house, you need so much more - insulation, drywall, roofing, windows, doors, etc. In relation to a job, this is the work experience. Do not make the mistake of discounting an applicant because they may lack the educational requirements. They may have years of work experience that provides them both a frame and substance and you may lose your best candidate if you are too rigid in your

requirements. This can often be uncovered in a good interview and reference check so be careful and thoughtful as you craft your educational requirements.

Keys to Their Success for Both Paid Staff and Volunteers

In this next section, we will discuss how you can help ensure the success of your new hire or new volunteer. Their success will be your success, so spending time in this area will likely pay off in a higher level of performance, job satisfaction, and the reduction of potential conflicts that often arise out of misunderstanding or assumptions on either your part or their part. I have found that most people want to feel successful and satisfied in their job, whether that is a paid position or a volunteer position, so taking the time and having a process for orientation, training, explaining goals, and scheduling time for one-to-ones will be critical factors in their success.

Onboarding and Training for Paid Staff

When you have a new paid staff person starting with your church, the first week is important in starting them off in a good direction. Too often, we are anxious for a person to start and generate work. We throw them into their position with just on-the-job training and no orientation to the facilities and to the other staff, less in terms of a personal introduction but more in the area of responsibility for each staff member. I would suggest that you allow a week of orientation activities combined with training. That week might look something like this:

Day One

- Introduce them to each staff member. Encourage all of your staff to be present on that first day, even if it is not their regular day to work. A brief summary sheet outlining the names, position, and responsibilities of each staff member and each key volunteer leader will be very helpful in orienting your new hire. This eliminates the requirement that they remember everything you will be telling them in this first few days or week and acts a quick reference.

- Give them a tour of the facilities including the sanctuary, offices, classrooms, etc.

- Give them some time to fill out all the necessary personnel related paperwork.

- Assuming you have an employee handbook (and you should), give them time each day to read a portion of the handbook.

- Give them a list of their essential functions and the goal/time sheet. We will discuss goal setting in the section – “Setting Goals”.

- Allow some time on the first day for them to work with whomever will be training them on these essential functions. However, do not make the mistake of overwhelming them with training on the first day.

- Allow time at the end of the day for them to ask any questions of you about what they learned, and any information in the handbook that was assigned to read.

Days Two through Three or Four – (Some churches are open four days during a workweek)

- Begin these days with a short time for any questions that they may have thought of overnight.

- Allow more time for training – should be 50-70% of the day depending on hours worked.

- Assign the next several sections of your employee handbook for them to read.

- Allow time at the end of the day for them to ask any questions of you about what they learned, and any information in the handbook that was assigned to read.

Last Working Day of the First Week

- Begin these days with a short time for any questions that they may have thought of overnight – particularly those related to their training.

- Allow them to execute some of their job by themselves, with their trainer available for questions.

- Continue training on any of the essential job functions not covered.

- Finish reading the employee handbook and have them sign a sheet that indicates they have read and understood it.

- Allow time at the end of the day for them to ask any questions of you about what they learned, and any information in the handbook that was assigned to read. At this juncture, you may want to ask them if they feel they have the resources they need. You should ask this question again when training is completed.

Depending on their level of previous experience or the essential functions or some combination thereof, it may take several weeks of training and supervision for them to start to become proficient at their assigned job. This is a variable that is different with each job and each individual. Some people are slow learners, but once they understand it, they have it. Others,

usually because of similar job experience, will grasp their essential functions quickly. As the pastor-leader, it is your job to assess what additional time may be needed for training.

Volunteer Orientation and Training

Volunteers, particularly those who will be in a leadership role, should also have a type of orientation and training. While they will very likely be familiar with your facilities and staff, as a volunteer, they will not be subject to your employee handbook, but as previously stated, it is helpful for them to have a job description that has essential functions and expectations clearly written out. For example, if you have a volunteer leader who is responsible for mission activities both within and outside of the church, it would helpful for them to know which staff person is their "go to" person for help. That person might be you, depending on the size of your church, but it does not have to be. It will be helpful for them to fully understand the mission and vision of the church within the context of their role as a volunteer leader. Most volunteer roles like this need the support of a committee. Do not assume they possess the know-how to recruit committee members, create meeting agendas, conduct meetings, or assign tasks. This is where having a mentor partner becomes invaluable. It could be someone who held that position in the past and executed it well. It could be a staff person assigned to assist them. But it should be someone who is familiar with the essential functions of this volunteer position who can offer advice and support as the new volunteer becomes oriented to their volunteer responsibilities. A mistake I see churches make is they give the volunteer a job description and maybe a few hours of orientation with a group of other new volunteers in different positions, but they do not spend the time making sure each new volunteer leader grasps what is expected and provide a mentor partner to assist for the first few months.

Setting Reasonable Goals for Paid Staff and Volunteers

Part of the hiring process and the potential success of your staff and volunteers is having concrete goals. Back in the early 1980's, the acronym "SMART" as a reference to goals was developed by G.T. Doran.[11] This is still a valid method for thinking about and writing out goals.

[11] G.T. Doran, "There's a SMART Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives," *Journal of Management Review*, Volume 70 (1981): 35-36.

S – Specific – Goals should be clearly written and precise.
M – Measurable – Goals should have some outcome that can be either measured or observed.
A – Action-oriented – Goals should require some action on the part of the individual to achieve.
R – Realistic – Goals must be attainable. The "goal" is not to frustrate but to motivate.
T – Time limited – Goals should be bound by some time period.[12]

The purpose of having individual goals is to align staff or volunteer efforts towards the greater mission and vision of the church.

The initial goals of a new hire will be different than ongoing goals. For example, for a new hire you may, as part of the hiring package, want to list out the first 90 day's goals broken into 30-, 60-, and 90-day goals. Let's look at a short example for an Administrative Assistant:

30-day Goals -

- Meet all staff and volunteer leaders.
- Learn how to create an order of worship.
- Watch three tutorials on our church management software system.

60-day Goals -

- Continue with items above as needed.
- Begin to download and upload all necessary communications to congregation using the church management software system.
- Learn who all our repeat vendors are and make sure you understand what service each one provides.
- Begin to learn and start scheduling all church events on the master calendar.

90-day Goals -

- Continue with items above as needed.
- Master all the church management software systems with respect to congregational information and contacts.
- Schedule all on-going maintenance for facilities and follow-up for proper completion.
- Add new visitors, send new visitor letters, and schedule follow-up.

On-going goals should be based on the "SMART" formula for each paid staff member and each volunteer leader. This will mostly likely be annual goals if you do annual reviews but they can have a shorter time horizon. As you create these goals, think about what you want them to achieve and in what time period so that a certain outcome can be accomplished. I would encourage you to sit down with your staff person or volunteer leader and discuss the overarching

[12] Ibid.

mission and vision of the church and what role they play in achieving that. Creating these goals with the individual will likely increase engagement in achieving the goal. You will need to have some goals in mind so you can assist in steering the conversation and goal setting.

Once you have agreed upon goals, the achievable and progress towards the achievable should be discussed in your one-to-ones so that when it comes time for the annual review, neither party is surprised by the progress made or not made on the goal and why. You may find you have similar goals year-over-year, but I want to encourage you to set new goals whenever possible to keep alignment and engagement in the mission and vision of your church.

Your volunteer leaders might struggle with the concept of having individual goals so you may want to consider having larger goals for the group, or parts of the group, that they can work on together and feel a sense of accomplishment. With your volunteers and staff, never be afraid to adjust, change, or eliminate a goal if you find that circumstances have changed since the initial writing of the goal.

<u>One-to-Ones</u>

Part of being a successful pastor-leader with staff is knowing what impact their work is having, both in terms of hitting or missing the mark. Some pastors prefer to have a very unstructured one-to-one with their direct reports (staff) and just let the conversation flow. I would recommend a slightly more structured way of approaching this time. Remember, the purpose of this time is to keep abreast of what is happening in the personal and work life of your staff. I would suggest having these meetings once to twice a month and scheduling the time in the calendar as a recurring meeting. To be effective, you may want to follow a plan that looks something like this:

- Always open and close your meetings with prayer. Invite God into the conversation and allow God to direct the outcomes.
- Be prepared and ask them to be prepared. You may want a quick one sheet form that outlines three areas – personal, professional, and progress on goals.
- Let your staff member do most of the talking. You should use your form to take notes and circle back to any area that might need clarification.
- Try to look towards the future rather than dwelling on the past. It is appropriate to correct mistakes, but then move forward. What can you be doing to help them succeed? What should they be doing to help you succeed?

- As you discuss goals, be specific on the progress you expect to see. If they are falling short of the goal, ask why and then ask them what they think the remedy should be.
- Close with positive feedback. Everyone wants to know what they are doing well. This time is an opportunity for you to provide constructive advice not admonishment.

Having a conversation of this type with your volunteer leaders can be very helpful to both of you. I would not suggest any more than once a month or even every other month. It could certainly be done on the telephone. While your volunteer leaders may be providing monthly reporting of their activities, you may not know what is frustrating them or what in their personal lives may be acting as an impediment to their success.

Conclusion

As we close this section on "Where Do I Begin," I want to encourage you that while at first, all of this may seem daunting, once you establish a rhythm for yourself, your staff, and your volunteers, you will discover that it becomes less time consuming and more valuable in helping you be effective in your call as a pastor-leader. Each time you create a job description, conduct an interview, and hold a one-to-one, you will find your proficiency increases. But with all of that said, the covenantal nature will also be at the forefront of these various administrative duties, so having a plan and executing that plan will allow you to maintain that delicate balance of being their pastor as well as being their supervisor.

Example Job Description

Pleasant Valley Church

Job Title: Director of Music Ministries Effective Date: 6-1-2023
FLSA Status: Exempt

Job Summary/Purpose:

To lead and coordinate the entire church music program in providing appropriate choral and other music during worship services and special church events.

Organizational Relationships:

Reports to the Head of Staff. Serves as the primary staff liaison on the Worship and Music Committee. Supervises music staff (whether paid or volunteer) including accompanist and all other choirs and musicians.

Essentials Functions:

- Plans, in consultation with the Pastor and Worship Committee, a quality music program which supports the full church service according to liturgical seasons or other themes for the congregation, including selection of hymns, choral and other music as well as special services such as Easter and Christmas.
- Establishes music programs goals and objectives in conjunction with the Worship and Music Committee.
- Directs all choirs and accompanists in rehearsal and presentation of music at all services and at special programs including small ensembles and soloists.
- Trains all choirs in Choral techniques, appreciation of sacred music, leadership and participation in worship through regular rehearsals and special rehearsals as needed.
- Contributes to expanding the congregation's repertoire and use of hymns and worship songs.
- Plans and implements annual choir retreat/workshop.
- Organizes and supervises recruitment of members for choirs, soloists, and such other choral and/or instrumental groups as needed.
- Provides oversight of the maintenance and inventory of all church music and musical instruments in coordination with other musical group leaders.
- Assists in the recruitment of volunteer and staff positions for music program leadership.
- Selects and purchases of all necessary music and music supplies, the hiring of instrumental and vocal soloists, and substitutes as needed.

Other Duties and Responsibilities:

- Attends monthly staff meetings and Worship and Music Committee meetings as scheduled.

- Provides recommendations for budgetary planning and managers the annual budget for the music program.
- Completes self-evaluation in consultation with annual performance evaluation process.
- Coordinates all music by holding meetings with all the Directors and Coordinators of music programs as needed with an annual planning session at minimum.

Qualifications:

Education, Training & Experience

- Master's degree in Music Education, Choral Conducting, or another related field.
- Experience conducting choral and instrumental music.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Knowledge of hymnody (composition and history of hymns) and various forms of church choral music (i.e., contemporary, traditional, classical, sacred, etc.)
- Knowledge of songs and hymns appropriate on the Christian calendar (i.e., Pentecost, Advent, etc.)
- Ability to read music fluently.
- Ability to work with a wide variety of people in various positions.
- Self-directed.

Physical Demands:

The physical demands described within this document are representative of those that must be met by the employee to perform the essentials functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made depending on employees physical limitations. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently exposed to a noise level that is usually moderate.

This job description does not represent, nor is it intended to be a complete and exhaustive detailed list of all job duties and requirements. Other duties and responsibilities may be assigned and/or changed at the discretion of management, with or without advance notice.

_____ _____

Employee Signature Date

_____

Print Name

_____ _____

Head of Staff or Human Resource Director Date

Example Volunteer Application

Pleasant Valley Church
Volunteer Application

Name:_____

Date:_____

Street Address:_____ City: _____ Zip code:_____

Email Address:_____ Cell:_____

1. Which general volunteer work categories interest you? Check all that may apply.

Mission
- □ Committee Work

  Assist at which level:
  - □ Local
  - □ Regional
  - □ Global

Children and Youth Ministries
- □ Committee Work
- □ Sunday School
- □ After School
- □ Tutoring
- □ Mission Trips
- □ Elementary
- □ Mid School
- □ High School

Ushering
- □ Sunday
- □ Special Services

Greeting on Sunday
- □ Greeting before/after Service

Fellowship Activities
- □ Committee Work
- □ Set up
- □ Cooking
- □ Serving
- □ Clean up

Facilities Maintenance
- □ Committee Work
- □ Small clean up
- □ Small gardening

Business and Church Finance
- □ Committee Work
- □ Counting the Offering
- □ Yearly Financial Review

Worship
- □ Committee Work
- □ Decorations
- □ Special Occasions

2. What qualifications/skills/experience/education do you have that you would like to use in your volunteer work?

3. Do you have any physical limitations that we need to be aware of? Yes No

4. Are there any days of the weeks or months of the year that you are not available?

5. Is there any other information about volunteering that you would like to share?

Thank you so much for your willingness to be part of our ministry efforts.

Example Interview Template

Date: _____ Applicant: _____

Position: _____

Scoring Key:

1 – Less than required. General experience is not comparable. Answers to questions are vague or without real substance. Cannot provide appropriate examples in response to either hypothetical or behavioral questions. Candidate would struggle to succeed.

2 – Meets requirements. Candidate had examples that were comparable and could fulfill the role but would not do any more than asked. May lack initiative.

3 – Exceeds requirements. Candidate has equal to or more than needed in all areas of requirements. Was clear and concise in answers with good examples.

4 – Greatly exceeds requirements. Person may be in top 10 percent of candidates. Shows a pattern of always exceeding expectations. Excellent communicator, very clear in responses and asks good questions.

Traditional Question: (Example – Tell me what you did in your previous job)

_____

_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____

_____

_____

_____

Traditional Question: (Example – What do think are your strengths and weaknesses)

_____

_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____

_____

_____

_____

Traditional Question: (Example – Why are you seeking a new job?)

_____
_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____
_____
_____
_____

Hypothetical Situation Question: (Example - How would you handle XX situation?)

_____
_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____
_____
_____
_____

Hypothetical Situation Question: (Example – What would you do if this XX happened?)

_____
_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____
_____
_____
_____

Behavioral Based Question: (Example – Can you tell me a time when you had to handle an angry person?)

_____
_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____
_____
_____
_____

Behavioral Based Question: (Example – Can you tell me a time when you had to choose between two important priorities but only had time for one – how did you choose?)

_____
_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____
_____
_____
_____

Behavioral Based Question: (Example – Tell me a time when you had to arrive at a compromise?)

_____
_____

Applicants Answer: Scoring of Answer 1 2 3 4

_____
_____
_____
_____

Total Score:

** You may find you do not need hypothetical questions so you would eliminate this section. You can score each section separately and aggregate their scores. Each person conducting the interview should use the same sheet and score so that you can compare. A person scoring an average of 0-1 is probably not your best candidate depending on the essential functions of the job. Conversely, a person scoring 3-4 is a great candidate and will likely be pursued by others as well as you.

Section II - The Art of Delegation and Accountability

Now that you have your staff and volunteers selected, trained, and their orientation completed, how do you determine the appropriate level of ongoing delegation and oversight? This is likely to be the most nuanced portion of your job as a pastor-leader, hence the use of the word "art." You need to maintain authority while keeping your pastoral authenticity which is no easy task. Having a system in place, understanding when and how to delegate, and how to follow-up will make the navigation of this leadership task easier.

These two terms - delegation and accountability - go hand-in-hand. Max De Pree outlines three keys to success in this area:

- Maintaining integrity
- Willingness to work on building and nurturing strong relationships
- Bringing that building and nurturing so that the entire community of believers benefits.[13]

Furthermore, it is important for the pastor-leader to grasp the fact that they do not need to know every job in the church. Diversity of gifts is biblical:

> **4** Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, **5** and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. (I Corinthians 12:4-6)

And while Paul is speaking about spiritual gifts, the same concept applies when working within a church environment – even administratively. Leaders who learn how to delegate and supervise effectively allow others to reach their potential.[14] But caution is warranted. Remember that the nature of a covenantal relationship is based on a commitment to shared goals such that the execution of these goals will enable the church to achieve its mission and vision. In the secular world, this relationship would lean towards being more contractual, i.e., quid pro quo - I pay you X and you deliver output Y. This is where that "nuance" comes into play. Pastor-leaders have a lot of responsibilities, and adding supervision can seem like a time-consuming task and one that many pastor-leaders feel ill-equipped to handle. Unfortunately, unless your church is large enough to support an executive pastor position and that person is tasked with these responsibilities, you, as the pastor-leader, will need to function in this role.

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[13] Max De Pree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989), x-xi.

[14] Ibid, 19.

Rendle and Beaumont, in their book *When Moses Meets Aaron*, speak about what supervision is not:

- Supervision is not telling someone how to do their work.
- Supervision is not sharing the work.
- Supervision is not the chance to "fix" someone.
- Supervision should not become therapy.[15]

If that is a list of what you should not do, then what is it you should do? I would offer this list:

- Make sure your staff and volunteers have everything they need to be successful, including appropriate training.
- Communicate to your staff and volunteers your expectations for their daily, weekly, monthly, etc., work output, both in terms of quantity and quality.
- Have a set system in place for feedback conversations (one-to-ones) and schedule and conduct formal work reviews. (Note: This is more formalized for staff than for volunteers)
- Have a system in place for progressive corrective actions with a timetable. (Same note as above)
- Build in time for positive affirmations and celebrations – particularly of goal achievement.

How you choose to approach the supervision of staff and volunteers, through task delegation and accountability, can make your job as a pastor-leader either easier or more difficult. I recommend that you establish and maintain a good system because in doing so, you will find your job as a pastor-leader significantly improved. Let us begin this discussion by speaking about delegation and then we will discuss how to hold people accountable, including the more formal process of reviews.

Delegation

Delegation, in simple terms, is the transfer of responsibility for specific tasks from you, as pastor-leader, to another while maintaining an appropriate amount of oversight. From a secular perspective, management typically delegates specific tasks to specific employees. This is done so that the manager can focus on higher value tasks. I believe this applies to the church environment as well. Being able to delegate tasks encourages your staff to work independently knowing that they are relied upon to complete the assigned task(s) in a thorough manner and in

[15] Rendle and Beaumont, *Moses*, 90-92.

the time assigned. In an article by Lauren Landry, in the Harvard Business School on-line, she writes about common obstacles/reasons why managers (and I would add pastor-leaders) have trouble delegating. "They might:

- think it would take longer to explain the task than actually completing it themselves.
- want to feel indispensable to their team by being the keeper of specific knowledge.
- enjoy completing certain projects so prefer not to reassign them.
- feel guilty about adding more work onto another employee's to-do list.
- lack confidence or trust in who they need to transfer the project to.
- believe that they're the only ones who can do the job right."[16]

Once you have acknowledged what may be holding you back from effective delegation, you must understand the "when, what, and how" of delegation and what steps you should take to delegate effectively.

Delegation – When, What, and How

This section will assist you in answering the "when, what, and how" of delegation and provide steps for the same. You will become more effective in this ability to delegate over time. The axiom "success breeds success" is especially true here. Delegation not only frees up your time, but builds the skill-set of your staff/volunteers and allows them to participate in tasks that may then become part of their routine. This, in turn, builds confidence both for your staff/volunteers and you in your staff/volunteers. Let's start with the "when."

You know you need to delegate "when" you find yourself spending time on smaller tasks that are not leaving you time for the bigger, value-added tasks that you, as the pastor-leader, should handle. We find a biblical example in the story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah recognized that the task of rebuilding the wall would take a cooperative effort. He assigned tasks such that everyone understood what the task was, what was expected of them, and had the tools/materials to complete the task. This coordinated effort, in spite of repeated interruptions, resulted in rapid progress. The art of delegation, and it is an art, is an important leadership skill. Pastor- leaders are often guilty of taking on too much and thereby creating unnecessary stress on themselves as well as limiting the use of the gifts of those around them. And, as a long-time business owner and manager, I have learned the value of knowing when it is time to teach another a task that I

[16] Lauren Landry, "How to Delegate Effectively: 9 Tips for Managers," Harvard Business School Online, January 2020, https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-delegate-effectively/ (accessed June 22, 2023).

was handling. As a person who likes to maintain control over everything, it took me time and experience to master the ability to let go of certain tasks. However, if I had not done this, I would have inhibited the ability of my company to grow and my staff to grow.

The same is true for pastor-leaders. And add to that the issue of pastor burn out which was exacerbated by Covid. A report from Barna states that as of March 2022, the percentage of pastors who have considered quitting full-time ministry within the past year is now up to 42 percent; up 13 percentage points from 29 percent in January 2021.[17] Learning to delegate will help that feeling of being overwhelmed and in turn, hopefully reduce that feeling of burnout. The key is not waiting until you are overwhelmed as your decision-making can be negatively impacted when you are feeling this way. As previously argued, knowing the when of delegation is important, but knowing the "what" is equally important.

You will encounter more success in the task of delegation when you understand "what" should and should not be delegated. For example, a task that is sensitive as it relates to your congregation or another staff member may not be a good choice for delegation. However, there are day-to-day activities that could be delegated. They may require some training, but it will allow your staff and volunteers to become more proficient and allow you to develop trust in their capabilities.

First, in order to recognize the "what," you should learn the strengths and weaknesses of all of those to whom you may choose to delegate, as well as their previously assigned duties. In relation to paid staff, if you have established goals for a given staff member and this task is related to that goal, it is a good opportunity for you to delegate that task. Everyone has experience, skills, education, and gifts that are not always utilized in their essential functions. Knowing what these are will guide you in your choice of the "what" and to whom. Nehemiah provides a good example of understanding this concept.

Second, when you assign a given task, do so with clarity of your expectations on the timely completion of that task. And if it is a recurring task, make sure that is made clear. Explain what the end result of a good completion should look like. Make sure you ask them to tell you what they heard you say and give them space to ask clarifying questions. Remember that while

[17] Barna Research, "Pastors Share Tops Reasons They've Considered Quitting Ministry in the Past Year," April, 2022, https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry/ (accessed July 5, 2023).

you may be able to execute this task quickly, the only way your staff and volunteers will learn is for you to show them what's expected and allow them time to become proficient. You need to stop the default thinking of, "I can do this faster myself." While this may be true initially, it will always be true if you fail to delegate.

Third, make sure you have given that individual the appropriate level of authority to complete the task and any resources they may need. Warning - resist the urge to micromanage the actual work of completing the task. How you might complete the task may differ from how someone else may complete the task. Your focus should be that the task is completed in a timely fashion. You should also make sure that they can ask you questions that may arise after the initial training and perhaps include a progress report in your one-to-one updates.

Fourth and final, allow for mistakes. While you might have perfected a process, it might take several attempts for another, who is learning, to get the completed product to your level of expectation. Caution is warranted here. Mistakes while learning are normal, but repeating the same mistake after correction and training can point to a competence issue, a training issue, the wrong choice, or some combination thereof. Just because you have delegated a task does not mean you do not follow-up. Schedule a time for quick feedback conversations so that the individual quickly and clearly understands if they are, or are not, completing the task correctly.

I realize that all of this may be challenging for you, particularly if you can execute any given task quickly. Be patient and allow them to express frustration if they are struggling with a task and when it is done properly, give them credit for a job well done. Landry states the following, "The more you thank and credit those you've delegated work to, the more likely it is they will want to help you on other projects in the future."[18]

We have discussed the when and what, but the last piece of the delegation puzzle is learning "how" to actually delegate. This is where you move from thinking about when and what to the actual delegation of a given task. Rendle and Beaumont offer three broad areas on the "how" to delegate – assigning the task, monitoring the task, and handling the results.[19] I will discuss each of these as it relates to both the when and what.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Rendle and Beaumont, *Moses,* 115-117.

The “how” of delegation requires you to move into action. Once you have decided on when and what tasks to delegate and to whom to delegate, you need to take action and assign the task. Assigning the task should consist of several steps: 1) clearly explain why you have chosen to delegate this task(s) to the particular staff person, 2) set out your guidelines for the hand off (for example, you may want to set a time to meet to show this person what you want and how a finished job should look), 3) you should give whatever level of authority they need as well as materials to accomplish the task because whenever you give someone responsibility without the appropriate authority, you are creating an opportunity for failure, 4) make sure they agree and accept the assignment including your established timetable, and 5) if this is going to be a recurring task, make sure they understand your parameters and timetable for recurrence, e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, etc.

Having completed these five steps, you will need to monitor the task assignment. Make sure you inform other staff that this task is now the responsibility of someone else. This is particularly important if the task assigned requires input from others within the church, whether they are staff or volunteers. For the first several due dates of this task assignment, you should schedule brief check-ins prior to the due date. You do not want to be surprised when the due date arrives but the task is not completed. This should be something you need to do with decreasing regularity as the person assigned demonstrates competence. Finally, and as previously stated, you need to remember that how you approach a task may differ than how someone else approaches the same task. As long as the finished result is correct and on time, resist the urge to criticize their approach.

The task is now complete and it is your opportunity to review and provide feedback on the results. For the first review, tread lightly. If something is not completed to your satisfaction or on time, ask questions as to why. If you have been monitoring the progress, this should not be a surprise. Retrain as necessary, but do not take the task back. If they have completed the task well and on time, give praise. A word of encouragement and positive feedback will go a long way and will encourage your staff’s willingness to take on more assignments. Remember - you are their supervisor but also a pastor. Jesus spent time teaching his disciples all the while knowing they would make mistakes. Remember this example. You can and should set high expectations, but also be willing to show grace when needed.

How Is It Different for Volunteers?

You may have noticed that I used both terms, staff and volunteers, in the previous discussion and that was deliberate. While the discussion of delegation has included volunteers and for the most part, the techniques you will use are the same, we cannot ignore the obvious fact that volunteers are just that – volunteers. The selection of volunteers is a crucial factor in the ability to delegate to those same volunteers and trust that the job delegated will be completed. Understanding the motivation behind an individual's willingness to volunteer can be helpful but is often difficult to discern. This is where you, as the pastor-leader, need to have an honest conversation with your volunteers to clarify the scope of what they have agreed to do and if they can take on more. You may want to delegate to a given volunteer because you know their skillset and abilities but they may not want to take on more. Just like with paid staff, communication is the key to success.

You might also want to reframe your thinking and assumptions about volunteers. Someone may volunteer to work at Habitat for Humanity, but they serve at church. Both are volunteer positions, but each may carry a different meaning for those in your church. I believe we often succumb to a false narrative we tell ourselves about volunteers. Sue Mallory, in her article "How to Hold Volunteers Accountable," states that we, as pastor-leaders, need to change our mindset about the laity. They are the church and are just as responsible for the success of the church.[20] And if we agree that this true, then how we approach delegation should not be so different than how we approach it with paid staff. The "when, what, and how" of delegation may have to be modified slightly as a volunteer's time is not as controlled, but the integrity of the approach should remain the same.

Delegation is the first step in the process of task-assignment, but knowing how to hold your staff and volunteers accountable for their commitments is important and a skill that you will utilize over and over in all aspects of your job as a pastor-leader. Let's take a closer look at what goes into the act of accountability.

[20] Sue Mallory, "How to Hold Volunteers Accountable," *Christianity Today,* December 2008, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2008/december-online-only/holding-volunteers-accountable.html/ (accessed July 8, 2023).

Accountability

The act of holding people accountable is challenging for most leaders, but particularly so if the leader is also the individual's pastor. Maintaining your pastoral relationship and authenticity while holding your staff or volunteers accountable for their work will require a certain amount of rethinking. Accountability should not be about placing blame or accepting blame when something goes awry; it is not about confessing (mea culpa). Accountability is about commitment and the willingness to have *intentional conversations* with those who report to you and who have agreed to complete a task(s).[21] It is the commitment to both be responsible and hold others responsible for outcomes based upon previously agreed upon assignments. Notice I spoke about both: you as the pastor-leader and those who report to you. The door swings both ways in accountability. You have to be willing to hold yourself accountable for the completion of work and any other commitments you have made in your daily schedule if you want your staff and volunteers to respect and honor you when you hold them to the same level of accountability. This requires discipline on your part. When something does go wrong (and it will), you should not lose your temper, act in a passive-aggressive manner, or just declare that you have to do everything because no one else can get the job done. None of these behaviors are helpful nor are the way to successfully hold people accountable. So this begs the question of how should you hold others accountable?

In Peter Bregman's article on the "Right Way to Hold People Accountable," he lists five steps as the starting point for understanding the proper way to execute this seemingly difficult task:

1) Make sure you have set clear expectations about what you expect to be completed and when. For staff, this should be directly related to the essential functions/duties of their job. For volunteers, it should be a documented discussion that confirms whatever was agreed to as part of their ongoing volunteer position or specific assigned activity.
2) Make sure that whoever was assigned the task has both the skills and resources to complete the task. This was discussed in delegation but bears repeating.

[21] Peter Bregman, "The Right Way to Hold People Accountable," *Harvard Business Review,* January 2016, https://hbr.org/2016/01/the-right-way-to-hold-people-accountable/ (accessed July 10, 2023).

3) Have a clear understanding of how you measure success. What is an example of a good outcome? You will avoid frustration for both yourself and the person assigned the responsibility if both of you can clearly articulate what the outcome should look like.
4) Give ongoing feedback. We will discuss how to give feedback in the next section, but set times for ongoing discussions so that you, as the pastor-leader, can both give and receive feedback. This will allow for course corrections and hopefully avoid failure.
5) All parties should understand the consequences of poor performance and failure to complete the assigned task(s) on time and correctly. Conversely, be generous in giving positive affirmations to those who are successful.[22]

Now, assuming all five steps have been done, course corrections and discipline may still become necessary, therefore you should establish a system of progressive corrections. This system will be more applicable to paid staff than volunteers, but a discussion with the same intentions can be implemented for volunteers. As we move into this discussion, let's begin with suggestions for feedback conversations.

Course Corrections

Part of holding people accountable is the ability to give and receive feedback and unless someone has committed an egregious error or act, this should be your first step. Effective feedback can avoid errors, redirect efforts, and/or redefine a task when necessary. In relation to volunteers, feedback is likely the only course correction that will be available for you. Additionally, feedback should employ a non-punitive approach. Your desire should be to coach, not punish, your employee. Many times, a failure in performance can be corrected by an open and honest conversation. At first blush, this may seem simple, but let's discuss how to give feedback and how to avoid deflection of the same.

Feedback

When preparing to give feedback, check your own emotional state. Are you feeling aggravated? Have you waited too long to give feedback and now you feel like it's too late? Or, are you so pleased with the work that you don't feel feedback is necessary. Feedback is not just about correction. Feedback should also be about affirmation. Before you begin to have a

[22] Ibid.

feedback conversation, write out the salient points of what you want to communicate and be specific. Here are some suggested steps.

First, set up the conversation by inviting the individual into a private place. This can be your office, the break room, a conference room, or their office if it is private. Avoid giving individual feedback in a setting where others can hear. This is particularly important when corrective feedback is necessary. You will be more effective if you do not put the individual in a position of feeling embarrassed and thus vulnerable. A word of caution is warranted - while you want to protect an individual's privacy and make them comfortable, you should not put yourself in a situation where you can be accused of impropriety. This will be a judgment call on your part. Utilizing an open space where others may see you but not hear you may be helpful in this situation.

Second, tell the individual in clear and concise terms what you have observed or reviewed (in the case of a written assignment). Be factual and try to use "I" statements rather than "You" statements. For example: "I reviewed the letter I asked you to write to our congregation about the upcoming mission fair, and I noticed it was not yet completed and had inaccurate information." Conversely, if you are offering positive feedback avoid using vague terms like "great job." Tell them specifically what you liked about the completed task.

Third, speak honestly about the potential impact of what you observed or reviewed. For example: "If this letter is not completed and sent out on time with the correct information, the turnout and success of this event will likely be affected negatively."

Fourth, allow them to give you a response. This is not the same as an excuse. Be aware of the tactic of deflection. Deflection might sound something like this: "I couldn't get it completed because Sally gave me the information late," or "My mother has been sick so I've been distracted." Both of these may be true and blaming is a common deflection, but your job is to bring the conversation back on track. For example: "If you require information in a given time period, you are responsible for reminding that individual and alerting me if it doesn't happen," or "I'm sorry to hear your mother is ill. Let's finish talking about this project, and we will pray about your mom after."

Fifth and finally, ask them what they feel is a good solution to this specific issue and how the issue can be avoided in the future? If you agree with their suggestions, tell them and set up a follow-up conversation to make sure that whatever was agreed upon is executed.

Learning to give feedback is a skill and requires time and attention. But like any skill, practice makes perfect, or at least better. Feedback conversations, done correctly, can avoid further corrections and can increase your satisfaction as well as that of the individual receiving the feedback as they will know what you expect. Jennifer Porter, in her article "How to Give Feedback People Can Actually Use," says this:

> Creating feedback that is truly useful requires more care and attention than is typically invested. Like any skill – chess, golf, learning Mandarin – offering strategic developmental feedback requires that we pay attention to and do many things effectively and simultaneously, Given the opportunity to help others develop and become more effective, it's worth the effort.[23]

If after receiving the corrective feedback the individual does not correct or implement any of the agreed upon suggestions, you should consider a more formalized step. This is part of the progressive correction/discipline process and should be documented. This will likely be used for paid staff rather than volunteers though the thought process around progressive discipline could be applied to a volunteer.

Progressive Corrections/Discipline

As a first more formalized step but keeping in mind that you desire a positive outcome, I suggest you use a counseling approach that incorporates a written form. As previously stated, this is more specific to paid staff rather than volunteers as you have no employment relationship with your volunteers so feedback is usually your only recourse. The choice of which step to take in progressive discipline really lies in the nature of the problem. You need to be very conscious of your biases at this step. This is where an employee handbook that clearly outlines specific actions that warrant discipline is helpful. Should you choose to jump to a written warning with specific consequences versus written counseling as the first step, make sure that counseling that same individual will not offer a better outcome. Most employees will view disciplinary actions as punitive and such action can be, if used indiscriminately. You need to know, in your own mind and perhaps by consulting with a human resource person (either staff or volunteer), what course of action is necessary. For the purposes of this discussion, we will begin with the first

[23] Jennifer Porter, "How to Give Feedback People Can Actually Use," *Harvard Business Review*, October 2017, https://hbr.org/2017/10/how-to-give-feedback-people-can-actually-use/ (accessed July 10, 2023).

step, counseling, and move through the more progressive steps including, when necessary, termination.

The concept behind counseling should be one of being gracious and giving the individual the benefit of the doubt. It has been my experience that most people want to do a good job. Sometimes, when that is not the case, several issues may be the cause. It could be a lack of understanding of the components to complete the job assigned, it could be a lack of sufficient training or resources, or it may be some personal issue that is causing distraction. Your job in utilizing the counseling form has three steps.

First, state the problem in clear and concise language. Make sure you can clearly articulate the issue and the problem it is creating. For example: “The worship bulletin is consistently a day late and as a result, we do not have time to properly prepare it for distribution on Sunday.” Second, allow the employee to respond but avoid accepting excuses. Come to an agreement on what needs to happen to avoid future discipline. For example: “John will complete the bulletin by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday and send an email to whomever needs to review it.” Allow the employee to tell you what they heard and what is expected. Third and finally, allow the employee to write down any comments. You do not have to agree with their comments but you are allowing them to express them in the document. This document should be signed by both of you and retained in their personnel file. Note - an example of a blank Employee Counseling Form can be found at the end of this section.

If it becomes necessary to give a sterner warning with consequences, you should utilize a discipline/correction warning form. This form is worded in a more serious manner and reflects consequences if correction does not occur. Pastor-leaders may struggle to use a form like this as it may feel harsh and against their pastoral instincts. However, if any person’s actions or inactions are not aligned with the mission and vision of the church or if their actions are harmful to others, you are obliged to provide discipline. Discipline should be thought of as remedial versus passing judgment. You are not helping the employee, the rest of the staff, and your congregation if you choose to ignore a problem and/or fail to correct the same. With that decision made, fill out the remainder of the form using the steps discussed below.

First, indicate if this is the first time a warning has been issued for this problem. If you have counseled on this problem and are now moving to a warning, indicate that this is the second warning. Decide how much time you want to give the individual to improve (probationary

period) or in the case of a suspension, how long the suspension may be. Caution again is warranted. Suspension should only be used when the employee has committed a serious breach of expected behavior such as abusing a drug while at work, sexual harassment, derogatory or discriminatory language directed at another, etc., and you will need time to investigate an alleged action. Once you choose to suspend an employee, it is likely that they will lose all motivation and begin a new job search. However, you are obliged to investigate any allegation of sexual misconduct or abuse. Suspension, with or without pay, allows you time to obtain the facts needed to make a just, informed decision and not an emotional one.

Second, clearly and concisely write out the reason for the warning. For example: "John has been counseled on the importance of completing the bulletin on time but it continues to be late." As you are writing out this reason, you should ask yourself if this issue really warrants discipline. Has John been mostly on time and late only once or twice? If this is the case, you may want to have another talk with John on the specifics of the times he was late completing the task. It may be easily resolved and you have jumped to a more punitive solution unnecessarily.

Third, clearly write what steps the employee needs to take to correct the situation and the consequences if the situation is not corrected. For example: "John agrees that the bulletin will be completed every week on Wednesday by 9:00 a.m. and will alert his supervisor by Tuesday morning if information is missing or other reasons why the bulletin cannot be completed. John understands the importance of timely completion to avoid further correction or disciplinary actions."

Fourth, let the employee write their response. Just like with the counseling form, give the employee an opportunity to state their side of the issue.

Fifth and finally, if probation is warranted, specify the time for correction and whether the suspension is paid or unpaid. I would recommend that if you need to investigate a claim related to misconduct, you suspend with pay to indicate to the employee that you have not already made your decision. This document should be signed by both of you and retained in their personnel file. Note - an example of a blank Discipline/Correction Warning Form can be found at the end of this section.

While the Discipline/Correction Warning Form can be used multiple times, there will come a time in your vocation as a pastor-leader where you will find that discipline does not

correct the problem and/or that an issue or behavior has happened such that termination becomes necessary.

Terminations

When considering termination, I highly recommend you discuss this with your leadership team, Human Resource expert, or, if you have a very small congregation, a trusted expert prior to termination. Robert H. Welch, in his book *Church Administration,* recommends five questions you and your advisor(s) should ask yourself:

1) Does this individual need to be terminated because their work is blocking the success of your church's mission and vision and/or causing harm? And are your standards measuring performance fair and the same for all employees?
2) Is there consensus on termination amongst you and your advisor(s), and do you have a go-forward plan for replacement and work assignment?
3) Can you clearly articulate the reason for termination? For example: relational behaviors, moral behaviors, performance behaviors, etc.
4) Have you given this individual every chance to correct and succeed?
5) Have you prayed and consulted the Holy Spirit as to the proper action?[24]

If after completing these five steps you determine that termination is the necessary action, you should complete a multi-purpose form labeled "Notice to Employee as to Change in Relationship." This form can be used when an employee resigns, is laid off, takes a leave of absence, or is discharged (terminated). Note - a copy of a blank form can be found at the end of this section.

Terminating an employee is difficult so preparing yourself and the setting can help with the anxiety you will likely feel. I would recommend the following steps which include filling out the above referenced form in advance.

First, consider the setting. It should be a private place like your office or conference room. You should always have someone with you as a witness and this individual should not be speaking. Second, be succinct. Do not drag the meeting out but rather state the reason for this decision using clear and concise language. This should match what you have written in the "Notice to Employee as to Change in Relationship" form. Third, be considerate and kind in your

[24] Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration* (Nashville, TN: BH Publishing Group, 2011), 152.

approach, but do not allow the individual to talk you out of your decision. Fourth, explain any terms associated with this termination, i.e., accrual vacation pay, severance if offered, and extension of any medical benefits, etc. (Please note that each state may have differing laws regarding the extension of medical benefits; make sure you know what your state requires.) Fifth, have the employee return any keys, documents, or any other property that belongs to the church. Sixth and final, do not allow the employee to linger. Review with them what work may be in process, allow them to gather up their personal belongings, and politely escort them from the premises. While your inclination may be to allow them to tell everyone good-bye, this can be problematic and make everyone uncomfortable.

After the employee has left the premises, I highly recommend you have a quick staff meeting to let any other staff know what happened. However, do not disclose personal information and specific reasons for the termination. It is sufficient to say that the relationship was not working out and you wish them good fortune in the future. You should use this time to discuss the impact on the church, your plan for replacement, and how the work will be accomplished while you are seeking a replacement. An example of a table summarizing the steps in the accountability cycle can be found at the end of this section.

A word of caution is warranted here. If this employee is a member of the congregation and/or has friends in the congregation, especially in a leadership role, you should be prepared for the possibility of conflict. It has been my experience that when a staff member who is also a member of the congregation is terminated, they will leave that congregation. Their departure can leave other friends and members upset. This requires you, as the pastor-leader, to do some advance preparation. Often, you will need to keep the reason for the termination private, but you should alert your volunteer leaders of your decision and assure them that you followed all of the reasonable steps to correct the problem before making this decision. You should be prepared to have one-on-one meetings with those who are upset by this decision. You need to prepare yourself to let them speak, vent their emotions and concerns, acknowledge them, and seek their support even if they do not agree with your decision. You should remind them that your call is to oversee the entire congregation such that you are always moving towards the fulfillment of the larger mission and vision. You may not be able to satisfy this individual, but they may appreciate your willingness to hear them, acknowledge them, and share with them.

To conclude the more challenging aspects of course corrections within accountability, I would like to remind every pastor-leader that holding people accountable for their commitments can be a daunting task, but if you have clear job descriptions, become proficient at the interviewing process and new-hire training as discussed in the first section, you will find that the delegation and accountability pieces become easier to execute. Also, as you establish a routine for one-to-ones that could and should include feedback conversations, you may be able to avoid the more difficult task of counseling, progressive discipline, and termination. I would also like to suggest you reframe your thinking about holding people accountable. As a pastor-leader you are held accountable by your congregation and to God. In turn, it is your duty to do the same for those who report to you. Avoiding difficult issues and/or failing to celebrate successes will not lead to a positive outcome for you, for your staff, and ultimately for the mission and vision of the church. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12 that there are a variety of gifts but different people who possess them and then discusses the metaphor of likening the church to a physical body. All of your work, and the work of the church, is to glorify God and spread the good news of Jesus. These truths from scripture apply to every facet of the work in the church, including holding others accountable. Remember that you are never alone in your conversations and admonishments, God's Spirit is right at your side.

This final section pulls together both the act of delegation and accountability in a more formal process labeled "Reviews." A review is simply a more formal way of detailing the work performance for any given employee or volunteer whether or not you have had to counsel or discipline them. It is often an opportunity to review and rewrite the essential functions of a job and should be a regularly scheduled event as well as a collaborative process.

Reviews

Before we examine the steps, a note about the choice of using the word "Review" versus "Performance Appraisal." These words connote the same concept and action and can be used interchangeably. I prefer to use the word "Review" rather than "Performance Appraisal" as I personally find that employees are anxious about the concept of having their performance appraised. Conversely, employees seem less anxious over a formalized discussion that reviews the components of their essential functions and execution of these functions, any set goals, and overall job satisfaction. This is based upon my personal preference and experience rather than

objective data. While there is some data on this subject, I have not found it helpful when moving from theory to reality.

For example, during my time in business school, I studied W. Edward Deming, the author of the Total Quality Movement. Deming suggested that having reviews or performance appraisals are not helpful as they only look backward and at any moment can contain some element of luck. Furthermore, they do not take into account the problems in the "system" or work environment which he attributed to 94 percent of employees issues.[25] However, as I worked within my own business, I found that employees needed consistent feedback, both as outlined previously and in the more formalized setting that a scheduled review can provide. I would agree with Deming that the work environment and work resources can impact the work output and attitude both in a negative and/or positive way. But I disagree with Deming that reviewing an employee's work in a formal way adds little to no value. If handled correctly, it can steer the course of a given employee's development, both in skill and attitude.

I would also add that a work review can happen at any time, or set times, depending on how you choose to handle them. If we agree that a work review can be helpful then what should a review entail, how often should they occur, and how is it different for paid staff versus volunteers? We will discuss all of these but I will begin with the components of a review.

Components of a Review

Assuming you have created a solid job description, this same job description becomes the backbone of your review. You should be evaluating your staff member based upon what they were hired to accomplish as part of their normal work routine. A sample blank review sheet can be found at the end of this section. On that form, you will notice a suggested rating scale. You can copy the essential functions from their job description into the column labeled the same. The more challenging part is assessing their capabilities and turning that into a numerical rating. The rating scale suggested looks like this:

Rating Scale: 1 = Not Meeting Expectations
2 = Meets Some but Not All Expectations
3 = Meets Expectations
4 = Meets All and Exceeds Some Expectations
5 = Exceeds Expectations

[25] W. Edward Deming, *Out of Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 102.

As you examine each essential function, you need to ask yourself this question, “Over the specified period of time how did the employee perform?” Caution is warranted here. You may be unhappy with a recent mistake but you cannot let that cloud your overall judgment. Also, do not make the mistake of thinking of these as grades - 1 = F, 2 = D, etc. You should expect a competent employee to rate mostly 3’s. This does not mean they are a “C” employee. It means they are doing exactly what you hired them to do, no more, no less. The ratings of 4 and 5 should be reserved for the employee who takes on more than expected in a given category or does such a stellar job that you feel compelled to rate them higher. It is absolutely critical that your employee fully understand this so that they see a rating of 3 as acceptable and a sign that they are doing their job as expected.

The comment section is your opportunity to tell the employee why you are rating them above or below a 3. When you write your comments, be clear and concise utilizing examples of why they are falling below expectations or above expectations. As an example, let’s use John from our accountability section. In your feedback conversations with John, you have counseled him on the importance of getting the worship bulletin completed accurately and on time. After several failed attempts, John does indeed get the worship bulletin completed as expected and, in fact, has suggested ways to enhance the bulletin. You may want to give John a 4 and comment that his suggested enhancements, while they created a bit more work for John, produced a better finished product.

If you have been diligent in your feedback, counseling, and progressive discipline then the review should not be a surprise for your employee. However, if you find that the employee is rating below 3 in more than one or two categories, it should be a signal to you that something has gone astray or that you have not communicated effectively. Any employee who is rating below expectations should have received some type of feedback, counseling, or discipline. And if this is true, and they have not corrected their work performance, you need to examine why they are still part of your team.

The next section is an evaluation of goal completion. As mentioned in our first section on designing a job description, I suggested that employees should have ongoing goals as part of their growth. After an employee has completed their initial onboarding and training, new goals should be set and kept to two or three. In this section, you should list those agreed upon goals and rate them based on completion or percent of completion depending on the time assigned for

the goal. Again, use the comment section to clarify what worked or didn't work. This section should be collaborative in nature so I would suggest discussing these and coming to a consensus on a rating.

The final section on "Goals for the Upcoming Year" should also be collaborative. I suggest you ask the individual what they would like to achieve above and beyond their essential functions. It may be a new task or software program. If you agree that this goal will add value to the church, you should state what you are willing to do to help your employee achieve this new goal. For example: The employee has discovered a new website that gives greater access to art that can be incorporated into the bulletin and worship theme. It may have a certain cost. You will need to decide if this can be managed in your budget and if you agree it will be helpful. If both answers are yes, you can add that as a goal. There will be times when an employee will suggest something or you will suggest something that requires time to investigate. You can list that and note that it is pending further investigation and approval in the additional comment section. As the supervisor, you will need to set a time for follow-up and perhaps add this to a one-to-one conversation.

You should close the review by allowing the employee to add comments just like with every other written interaction. In this case, the employee may ask for some time to think about it. I would recommend allowing that but limiting it to a few days. I would also suggest that prior to the entire review process, you consider giving this form with the essential functions and goals filled in and allow the employee to review themself. Ask them to send their personal assessment to you for review prior to sitting down to discuss it. You will be surprised that most employees know their weak points and will likely rate themselves lower than you might rate them. This then becomes a wonderful opportunity for you to compare your evaluation with their self-evaluation and see if consensus can be reached. This will result in a more productive review session and will let the employee know you care about what they think and speak. And with each form, both parties should sign and date it and a copy should be retained in the employee's personnel file.

Conclusion

As we close this section on delegation and accountability, including the formal review process, I want to encourage you to not be put off by what may seem like a lot of paperwork and time spent. The time you are willing to invest in both your employees and volunteers will pay

dividends in the strength of your relationships with them and will benefit the church overall as it helps focus all parties on achieving the greater mission that God has set before us. And as I stressed throughout these first two sections, always remember that this is church and you will need to constantly balance on that fulcrum of the sacred and secular but as you become more proficient, you will find that they will be in balance and even become interwoven in your pastor-leader role.

Example Employee Counseling

Name of Employee _____ **Date** _____

Reason for Counseling:

_____
_____
_____

To avoid future discipline, employee and employer agree to the following:

_____
_____
_____

Employee Response:

_____
_____
_____

Counseling and/or Training Given By:

_____

Employee Signature: **Date:**

_____ _____

Example Discipline/Correction Warning

Written Warning (#____)
Notice of Corrective Probation Period Notice of Suspension

Name of Employee _____

Date _____

Reason for Warning/Notice:

_____
_____
_____

To Correct the Issue and Avoid Further Warnings the Employee Agrees to:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Employee Response:

_____
_____
_____

Probation Period: Effective Dates: _____ **to** _____
Suspension Period: Effective Dates: _____ **to** _____

I understand that failure to correct the issue stated above could result in further discipline including termination.

_____ _____
Employee Signature **Date**

_____ _____
Supervisor Signature **Date**

Example Notice to Employee as to Change in Relationship

Employee Name: _____

Your employment status has changed for the reason checked below:

Voluntary Resignation effective date: _____

Layoff effective date: _____
Leave of absence effective date: _____ , Expected return to work date:_____
Discharge effective date: _____

Reason for Discharge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Supervisor's Signature **Date**

_____ _____

.....

Notice Acknowledgment

I received a copy of this notice on _____

Employee Signature

_____

Example Review for Period Beginning _____ to_____

Employee Name: _____
Job Title: _____

Supervisor: _____
Date: _____
Rating Scale: 1 = Not Meeting Expectations
2 = Meets Some but Not All Expectations
3 = Meets Expectations
4 = Meets All and Exceeds Some Expectations
5 = Exceeds Expectations

Evaluation of Essentials Functions:

Essential Function	Comments (Areas of Excellence or Needing Improvement)	Rating

Evaluation of Goals:

Goal	Comments	Rating

Goals for Upcoming Year
1.
2.
3.
Additional Comments:

Employee's Comments:

Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Example Accountability Cycle

Why/Behavior	Action	Frequency	Next Steps	Timetable
First or second occurrence of error or behavior	Feedback	As often as needed	Error continues – Counseling	30 days
Redirect efforts or task	Feedback	As often as needed	Review in one to one	Mutual agreement
Volunteers – either error or redirection	Feedback	As often as needed	Review in one to one	Mutual agreement
Errors or behavior continues	Counseling	No more than twice for the same issue	Discipline/Correction	You Decide
Errors or behavior continues	Discipline/ Correction	Depends on the nature of the error or behavior Specify in form	Discipline/Correction Or Terminations	You Decide
Misconduct that requires investigation	Discipline/ Correction with Suspension	Depends on outcome of investigation	Depends on outcome of investigation	Depends on outcome of investigation
Unable to correct errors or behavior	Termination	Once	None	You Decide
Egregious behavior or conduct/Insubordination/ Proven harassment/excessive absenteeism/	Termination	Once	None	Immediate

**** Please note this is only an example. Many different incidents can occur in a relationship but these should be outlined in your employee handbook.**

Section III - Conflict Management and Resolution

Encountering conflict is a fact of life. As much as we may want to avoid addressing issues of conflict with and between our staff and our volunteers, conflict will arise. The interpersonal nature of conflict exists for all organizations and churches are no different. We all come with a plethora of differing needs, backgrounds, ideologies, and values, and the result of these varying factors can often lead to issues of conflict. I have yet to encounter a system of management that can prevent all conflict. What often happens is that conflict exists within the organization/church but we either fail to recognize it or fail to handle it when it arises, and when this happens, often a small flame that could have been extinguished has grown into a full-blown fire.

In my many years as a business owner, I have encountered conflict between myself and employees who report directly to me, between employees, as well as with outside influences such as customers and vendors. In my earlier years, I handled conflict poorly. I was confrontational, autocratic, and felt my way was the best way. I quickly learned that my style was creating more conflict and I had to learn constructive ways to manage through conflict, and when possible, resolve conflict. And while I am not an expert, I have had both training and experience in managing conflict and have taught others techniques that I have found useful. My goal in this section is to share some of my knowledge with others so they might be able to avoid frustrations and mistakes. A good start is understanding our own view of conflict.

<u>How We View Conflict</u>

Part of understanding conflict management is understanding how we view conflict. Do we avoid it at all costs? Do we see it as harmful to the organization/church? Do we feel ill-prepared to address it? I would like to suggest that not all conflict is bad; in fact, conflict can result in positive changes and even be transformative. And lest we forget, conflict existed in the early church and those early church leaders found ways to address it that we can learn from. Let's look at several examples.

Part of dealing with conflict, whether external or internal, is being willing to truly stop and listen to those who present a complaint or criticism.[26] In chapter 5 of Nehemiah, we read the

[26] Robert B. Sloan, "A Biblical Model of Leadership," in *Christian Leadership Essentials: A Handbook for Managing Organizations*, edited by David S. Dockery, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2001), 21.

outcry of the people against their Jewish brethren. It may have been easier for Nehemiah to ignore the cries of the poor people who felt extorted by the wealthy, but Nehemiah had the wisdom to understand that all voices must be heard and injustice could not be ignored:

> **9** So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? **10** Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. **11** Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." (Nehemiah 5:9-11)

Nehemiah was faced with many distractions and interruptions to the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem, but chose to deal with this internal conflict of those who had been disadvantaged by their own people. Part of dealing with conflict, whether external or internal, is being willing to truly stop and listen to those who are challenging you with an issue. Speaking the truth in love can be very challenging, but not confronting or addressing the truth can result in turning a festering issue into all-out war. Nehemiah provides three lessons here for pastor-leaders:

1) When you receive complaints (and you will) and/or conflict arises, stop, listen, and ask clarifying questions.
2) Always research the so-called facts of what you have heard to determine their validity.
3) If you find that the complaints are valid, have the courage to address those complaints.

In Acts 15, we read about disagreements arising over the inclusion of Gentiles and whether these same Gentiles should adopt Jewish practices. The leaders could have just reviewed the scriptures searching for a way to handle this particular issue, but instead they listened to both sides and then chose a middle ground. James spoke up and offered this:

> **19** "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. **20** Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood." (Acts 15:19-20)

Here we have a good example of the importance of listening to both sides, but also being willing to make a decision that reflects God's love and care. These leaders were representing the values that they firmly believed should be reflected within the church and among believers.

I would also state that we need to avoid the concept of "blaming the leader" when conflict arises. Jesus encountered plenty of conflict, as did Paul, and yet we do not consider them as examples of leadership failure. Scripture is replete with examples of discord, conflict, and even rebellion. Why? Because by our nature, we tend to be rebellious and sinful – we are human and you, as the pastor-leader, are human. We cannot avoid dealing with difficult people or difficult situations but we can learn constructive, covenantal ways to address conflict when it arises. I would suggest we reframe our thinking about conflict and see if we can use these times as opportunities to embrace change. For example, Jesus was close with his disciples, and particularly Peter, yet it did not stop Jesus from rebuking Peter (Mark 8:33). Jesus knew that Peter did not yet grasp the nature of the change that Jesus inaugurated and that Peter would eventually need to model. In spite of this exchange and Peter's eventual denial of knowing Jesus, Jesus continued to teach and prepare Peter for the work ahead.

Along with these biblical examples, Eugene Peterson, in his book *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction,* uses the Song of Ascent Psalms to comment and teach on many facets of the life of a Christian and a pastor. In his comments on Psalm 129, he references the need for perseverance and within perseverance, patience. Both of these qualities, perseverance and patience, are necessary tools in the pastor-leader toolkit, particularly during times of conflict. At times, the work of the church, the call on the pastor to know everything, do everything, and be good at everything, including solving all conflict, is exhausting. This is where perseverance becomes necessary. Patience within this sphere of perseverance reminds us that as humans, we will experience anger and exasperation with those we lead, but to pretend differently reduces our authenticity as humans.[27] This is when we need to dig deep and rely on God so that we can understand the difference between righteous anger versus the anger we express at our lack of patience with others. The truth of it is that most of our anger is the result of impatience, fatigue, and frustration at the seeming lack of enthusiasm that we expect from our staff and volunteers but who seem to fall short of our ideal. Peterson reminds us that this is when we lean into that "long obedience in the same direction."[28] We are humans and we will experience these flashes of anger, but God, in His wisdom, understands this and His Spirit prods us forward. To

[27] Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 123.

[28] Ibid, 124.

persevere in your leadership role will be daunting, but Peterson provides words of encouragement with this, "It is the way of life we were created for. There are endless challenges in it to keep us on the growing edge of faith; there is always the God who sticks with us to make it possible for us to persevere."[29]

But before we jump to solutions, let's first define the sources of conflict a bit deeper, examine constructive versus destructive conflict mindsets, and then examine the ways that our own physiology, background, and experience, in other words what makes us who we are, and how that impacts our abilities in the area of conflict management and resolution.

Types of Conflict and Our Own Biases

Conflict with the working environs of church can be defined as a state of discord that arises when either perceived or actual opposition occurs between two people or groups of people who are tasked with working together to achieve a common goal, i.e., the mission and vision of the church. It can arise from a difference of opinion on a specific task or issue, working styles, theological viewpoints, values, personal interests, cultural differences, and even an interior state of emotional wellbeing that is not obvious but impacts attitudes and behaviors. If not addressed, these conflicts can result in hurt feelings, low morale, decreased motivation, anger, and the exchange of unkind or abusive comments.

Between an employee or volunteer and you, as their pastor-leader, conflict can arise from a variety of sources, but more often can be categorized as follows:

- Poor communication resulting in unclear expectations or objectives
- Disrespect
- Conscious or unconscious biases
- Personal issues that are carrying over into the work environment
- Lack of sufficient resources to accomplish a given task or essential function
- Work environment, i.e., cramped space, old equipment, poor ventilation, etc.
- Unreasonable time frame to complete the task
- Lack of trust that develops when you, as the pastor-leader, fail to follow through on an agreement

[29] Ibid, 128.

- The employee's or volunteer's perspectives that can come from backgrounds, opinions, or previous work experience that are in conflict with your perspective
- Upheaval and/or significant organizational changes within the staff or the church, all of which can make an employee or volunteer feel threatened and insecure which in turn can lead to conflict

Between employees and volunteers, conflict can arise from many of these same factors plus a few more. Work style, i.e., some individuals can process work quicker than others or prefer an approach to a given task that is the opposite of how another co-worker or volunteer would approach that same task. Previous work experiences (both good and bad) combined with, or in addition to, unconscious biases can also play a role. How we perceive styles of communication can color our viewpoint. For example, those who speak little and just quietly do their work may be perceived as standoffish and not a team player, while those who are outgoing and gregarious may be perceived as overpowering or domineering. Neither of these may be true, but we may perceive them as being true which is why the differences in perspective often adds to tensions between staff and/or volunteers.

In addition to the above, we cannot ignore generational, gender, and cultural biases that can add fuel to the fire of conflict both between staff members and/or volunteers as well as you as the pastor-leader. In an article in *Christianity Today* by Wayne Jacobsen, titled "Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict," Jacobsen says this about generational conflict:

> These barriers are not insurmountable. Joel envisioned a community where the visions of the sons and daughters would fit side by side with the dreams of old men. His prophecy pictures a community able to draw on the wealth of God in each individual. The idealism of youth can be tempered by the wisdom of experience; and the routine of tradition can be energized by the exuberance of youth.[30]

Jacobsen recommends that the ability to respect and understand these differences can be a good step toward diffusing generational conflict. We need to harness the ability to see the issue(s) from another's perspective and respect both points of view.[31] I would add that adopting an attitude of humility will help us in our willingness to see both sides of any issue.

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[30] Wayne Jacobsen, "Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict," *Christianity Today*, July 1983, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1983/summer/83l3034.html/ (accessed July 25, 2023).

[31] Ibid.

While we would like to believe that gender bias is no longer an issue within churches and business organizations, that is not true. We have made good progress on how women are viewed, but biases still exist. These seems to be particularly true for women in leadership roles, whether that role is in the secular workforce or within the sphere of the church. Amy Jackson, in her article "Blessings and Burdens for Woman Leaders," says the following, "If a woman is competent, she does not seem nice enough, but if she seems nice, she is considered less competent. This bias often surfaces in the way women are described, both in passing and in performance reviews. When a woman asserts herself, she is often called "aggressive," "ambitious," or "out for herself." When a man does the same, he is seen as "confident" and "strong."[32] Be aware of how your gender bias, and that of your staff and volunteers, may be impacting approaches to any issue related to conflict.

In the area of culture, we need to acknowledge that we live in a country that is a mixing bowl of many cultures. Just having an awareness that different cultures address issues of conflict in different ways is a good first step. For example, Western culture tends toward an individualistic nature whereas some other cultures are better described as possessing a more collectivist nature. In a blog post by Regina Kim, "Is Collectivism Better than Individualism in Promoting Constructive Conflict Management?" she states, "Cross-cultural studies on conflict management styles indicate that **a competing style** is most widely favored by members of **individualistic cultures (i.e., the United States)** and **an avoiding style** is most widely preferred by members of **collectivistic cultures (i.e., China)**."[33] Understanding the cultural nuances will better equip you, as the pastor-leader, in utilizing a culturally sensitive approach so that someone raised in a different culture will be neither offended nor avoid the issue all together.

These are only three examples, but there are many more types of biases. Whatever the nature of the bias, you may need to examine yourself and see if you need to shift your perspective. Bias is often a function of a paradigm – some deeply held set of rules, beliefs, and even experiences that govern the ways in which we make sense of our world and place

[32] Amy Jackson, "Blessings and Burdens for Women Leaders," *Christianity Today,* August, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/blessings-and-burdens-for-women leaders.html/ (accessed July 29, 2023).

[33] Regina Kim, "Is Collectivism Better than Individualism in Promoting Constructive Conflict Management?," *The Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution,* https://icccr.tc.columbia.edu/ (accessed July 29, 2023).

boundaries to make us feel secure.[34] Perhaps we need to consider that a paradigm shift needs to happen within the sphere of our bias, whatever the origin. We also need to acknowledge that all of these factors may come into play in the types of conflict we will encounter in our role as pastor-leaders. Understanding and acknowledging them will be helpful in learning how to be effective when addressing them.

Another helpful way to understand conflict is understanding the difference between constructive versus destructive conflict. These are often a function of a given way of looking at conflict – a mindset. Let's examine them.

Constructive Versus Destructive Conflict

As previously stated, not all conflict is bad. Moving your attitude, and the attitude of those you work with, towards understanding the difference and impact of these two views can be helpful. Two types of thinking or mindsets can influence whether conflict can be viewed as constructive or destructive. A predetermined or fixed mindset will tell you that conflict is an either/or. An either/or mindset says, "I'm good or I'm not," "I either can do it and I cannot do it," or "I stick to what I know and that's my limit." In this type of mindset, there are almost no shades of grey. Compare this to an and/but mindset. This mindset is more flexible, growth-related. This mindset says, "I don't know this, but I can learn," "Challenges are opportunities for growth," and "I am willing to try something new". People with a fixed mindset tend to manage conflict more destructively because they exhibit inflexibility, they believe they are right, or want to do things the way they have always been done. Conversely, people with a more flexible mindset tend to manage conflict more constructively. They value other's opinions, are willing to acknowledge fault, and have a desire for a positive outcome for all. Depending on the situation, it is likely that you may exhibit both of these mindsets but will tend towards one over another. Look at this table below and see if you can identity times when you have been in either column.

[34] Carol E. Becker, *Leading Women* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 48.

Destructive Conflict Behaviors – Fixed Mindset	Constructive Conflict Behaviors – Flexible Mindset
Using emotional arguments to deflect perceived blame	Calming emotions and presenting support for the issue and resolution
Assuming questions or comments are personal attacks	Listening for questions and accepting criticism as potential for your development
Interrupting or rejecting a point of view before you fully understand that same point of view	Actively listening to the others point of view before commenting
Being "Devil's Advocate" because you enjoy being contrary	Being willing to disagree but open to finding a workable solution
Refusing to accept responsibility or change your mind	Being willing to accept responsibility and change your mind

In times of conflict, the ability to recognize which mindset might be influencing you, as the pastor-leader, and your staff/volunteers leaders can open the door to examine ways that these mindsets are impacting conflict management and resolution. Again, there are no easy answers but training in these areas can be a step towards recognizing and shifting your mindset. But there is more than just the type of conflict that comes into play - who we are as people, our physical makeup, our background, and previous experiences in conflict may play a role.

Our Physiology, Background, and Experience - The Impact on Conflict

While there are differences of opinion around the validity and use of personality-type assessments, many churches and businesses still utilize these to determine personality traits and how these traits might govern how people work normally and how they work when put into stressful situations. Within the PCUSA, all individuals seeking to begin the process toward ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament must have a vocation assessment done by a qualified psychologist. They will normally take a battery of personality assessment tests as well as have a dialogue with the psychologist. The purpose is to assess the individual's fitness to serve as clergy and what difficulties they may encounter in the process if they accept a call to ministry. I believe it can be very helpful to know how you will operate in any given set of circumstances. While these tests are not foolproof, they are an aid to assist in understanding your own personality type and the types of those with whom you work. Regardless of the type of testing you may or may not utilize, you may find it very helpful to understand what the underlaying characteristics and motivators are for yourself and for those who work for you.

It has been my experience that many pastor-leaders, by the nature of their desire to lead and serve God, are often peacemakers and as such struggle when faced with conflict and even hostile exchanges. Anxiety within the world and the church has risen to new levels since the pandemic and has had profound effects on the leaders of churches. If your personality leans toward being a peacemaker, anxiety caused by conflict can have a profound impact on you and reduce your effectiveness and overall mental health. A good first step in improving your ability to handle and resolve challenging situations is understanding your own attitude and behaviors and how you react when faced with certain situations, so let's start with your own physiology.

God designed our brains to think, to understand, to create, but also to protect us when we feel threatened. We have this small, peanut-sized part of our brain called the amygdala that kicks into gear when we feel a sense of danger or even unease. The Cleveland Clinic describes the job of the amygdala as follows, "Fear is the main emotion that the amygdala is known to control. That's why your amygdala is so important to survival. It processes things you see or hear and uses that input to learn what's dangerous."[35] Think of a time you encountered something unexpected like a snake or some dangerous animal. Your amygdala takes over and tells you, without you realizing it, that you need to get away. When this happens, you are reacting rather than responding. But this does not just apply to situations like this. Current research states that it can contribute to more than just the "fear" response. The Cleveland Clinic goes on to say that the amygdala contributes to:

- Aggression
- Learning through rewards and punishment
- Handling and using implicit (unconscious) memory, which allows you to remember how to do certain things without remembering how you learned them (like riding a bike or tying your shoes)
- Social communication and understanding, including how you interpret someone's intentions from how they talk or act
- Emotions that relate to parenting and caregiving
- Emotions we connect to memories

[35] Cleveland Clinic, Amygdala, https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/24894-amygdala/ (accessed July 7, 2023).

- Learned behaviors related to addiction[36]

If all this is true, and it can be, how do we recognize that in ourselves and in others? This is not an easy task because often, we are experiencing emotions without understanding what is causing that emotion. Terasa Cooley, in her book *Transforming Conflict: The Blessing of Congregational Turmoil*, states that, "people who are in what I sometimes jokingly call a "highly amygdalated state" simply can't think straight."[37] Learning to overcome some of these physiological reactions requires us to engage the thinking centers of our brain or our neocortex. Both sides of our brain work to process information and form thoughts, but our understanding in American culture puts more emphasis on the left side as the logic center delivering facts and not as much to the right. But it is actually that right side that adds the nuance, the context, the imagination and it can assist us in the ability to think out possibilities instead of just reacting to what we believe are the facts. We have the ability to do this, but it takes understanding, stepping back before reacting, and cooling our own emotional state before addressing an issue of conflict. I would suggest taking some time to self-reflect on how you see yourself, how you might be contributing to a given situation of conflict, and then developing some strategies to assist you in balancing your role as the pastor-leader when addressing situations of conflict.

Learning to lean into conflict rather than avoid conflict takes both time and practice. When we avoid conflict, we are not managing it, we are not resolving it, we are postponing it. We may even view conflict as a zero-sum game where someone must win and someone must lose. Unless it is an egregious situation demanding immediate confrontation, this attitude of winners and losers is not helpful and I would suggest, even harmful. Not all situations of conflict will lend themselves to a compromise that creates a win-win scenario, but when you can do this, the chances of resolution increase. We are the sum of our life experiences and we will encounter success in conflict management and resolution as well as failure. It is how we learn from both of these that will enable us to improve our skills in the area.

Brené Brown, in her book *Braving The Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone,* developed an acronym with strategies called "BRAVING" to assist

[36] Ibid.

[37] Terasa Cooley, *Transforming Conflict: The Blessing of Congregational Turmoil* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 21.

us in understanding ourselves and the ways that we could react that would be helpful in times of conflict. She states it as follows:

- **Boundaries:** Learning to set, hold, and respect boundaries. The challenge is letting go of being liked and the fear of disappointing people.
- **Reliability:** Learning how to say what we mean and mean what we say. The challenge is not overcommitting and overpromising to please others or prove ourselves.
- **Accountability:** Learning how to step up, be accountable, take responsibility, and issue meaningful apologies when we're wrong. The challenge is letting go of blame and staying out of shame.
- **Vault:** Learning how to keep confidences, to recognize what's ours to share and what's not. The challenge is to stop using gossip, common enemy intimacy, and oversharing as a way to hotwire connection.
- **Integrity:** Learning how to practice our values even when it's uncomfortable and hard. The challenge is choosing courage over comfort in those moments.
- **Nonjudgment:** Learning how to give and receive help. The challenge is letting go of "helper and fixer" as our identity and the source of our self-worth.
- **Generosity:** Learning how to set the boundaries that allow us to be generous in our assumptions about others. The challenge is being honest and clear with others about what's okay and not okay.[38]

All of us carry learned behaviors, both good and bad, and it is essential for us, as we practice these techniques suggested by Brené Brown, that we acknowledge how our backgrounds may be interfering in our ability to address conflict and move forward from conflict.

So what are some concrete steps we can take when called to address areas of conflict? In this next section, I will suggest some tactics you can use in conflict between you as the pastor-leader/head of staff and employees, conflict between employees and/or volunteers, and when to confront versus resolve.

[38] Brené Brown, *Braving The Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone* (New York, NY: Random House, 2017), 149-150.

Conflict Between You as the Pastor-Leader and Paid Staff/Volunteer Leaders

It's Wednesday afternoon and the deadline for having the order of worship is fast approaching. You have given feedback and counsel to your administrative assistant on the importance of having this done in a timely manner, but you are concerned as it doesn't seem that he will finish it on time. As you approach your administrative assistant to inquire on the status but before you can say a word, he raises his voice and loudly announces that he is sick and tired of your lack of patience. He is doing the best he can and you leaning over him, asking him why it is not done, isn't helping. How should you respond?

Now in this moment several things are happening to you physiologically. You are taken aback by his yelling at you, you may take a step backward, your heart rate may increase, and you may feel a sense of rising anger. These are normal responses but what you do next can either exacerbate this situation or calm the waters. You need to decide in that moment what is more important - allowing him to finish the work or stopping the work and addressing his inappropriate tirade. What you should not do is ignore it entirely and hope it will just go away. However, addressing the issue when both of you are now in a heightened emotional state will likely not be helpful. Take a moment to breathe and control your own emotional response. You need to decide how much time you need to regain your emotional balance and prepare to have a specific conversation about his reaction. Once you have done that, calmly tell him that getting the order of worship completed today is essential but you would like to speak to him when that task is completed or the next day. Giving space in a heated moment is helpful for both parties. Hopefully, he will cool down and you have given yourself time to reflect on the issue. Regardless of whether you speak to him at the close of the day or first thing the next morning, the steps you take should be the same:

- Write out what you perceive to be the problem. In this example, you may have two problems, i.e., repeated lateness on a deadline and an inappropriate response to your inquiry. If you have addressed the issue of lateness before and he continues to be late, you may not have effectively communicated or enforced any consequence. However, his angry tirade was completely inappropriate and needs to be addressed. Remember that while you may feel you know what the problem is – lateness and anger – this might be a symptom of some other issues so be open to listening.

- Consider the setting for the meeting. The space within which you work on conflict resolution can impact the outcome. Make the space neutral, if possible. For example, instead of you bringing in your staff member to sit at your desk with you behind it, consider either sitting side by side in your office or move to a different room and, if possible, sit side by side. Why is this important? You have the power in the relationship when it is boss to subordinate which will make an individual naturally defensive. If you can level the playing field so to speak, it may help them to relax.
- Remember this is church so open the meeting with prayer and invite God's Spirit of reconciliation and understanding to be present. I would recommend always opening and closing these types of meetings with prayer.
- Watch you own body language, i.e., make eye contact while speaking and listening. Keep your posture straight and try to keep your facial expression relaxed. Monitor the volume and tone of your voice. Often, how we say something can be as impactful as what we say. Be aware of your gestures. This is important for you but also important that you are aware of these same areas with the other individual. Be careful how you read body language as it can be a "false flag" with someone who is an introvert, neurodivergent, or generally is offput by any perceived aggression.
- If the person is expressing anger or is showing anger in their posture, ask their permission to be honest with them in how YOU perceive the conflict. Use "I" statements not "you" statements. Express to them your desire to understand what they are saying so ask permission to take notes. If you just start taking notes without this permission, it will make them nervous and less likely to speak honestly.
- Given you called the meeting, it is appropriate for you to state what you perceive is/are the problem(s). Be clear and concise without being accusatory. Focus on the facts as you know or experienced them. Don't speculate as to why they reacted as they did.
- Give them an opportunity speak and encourage them to be candid and honest. Keep asking open-ended questions but wait until they have finished speaking. Do not interrupt or correct them. Sometimes people just need to talk out their anger until it has a chance to dissipate.
- Be open to the possibility that your behavior or tone may have contributed to the problem.

- Practice reflective listening as they are speaking. Reflective listening should allow you to hear and understand the other person's point of view. Repeat back what you think you heard them say. Let them correct you if you misunderstood.
- If their perception of the issue is very different than yours – it is important to keep probing. Be open-minded – the issue may not be what you perceive. Listen for words like "always" or "never". When it is your turn to speak, return to these points and ask for examples – they may be exaggerating and it is important for you to establish reality versus perception. This is also a good way to get to the root of the problem which can be related to fear of some type. If necessary, keep asking clarifying questions until you feel you are clear on their point of view. Perhaps in this conversation you discovered that your administrative assistant has been dealing with some very difficult personal issues and their combative tone was misplaced aggression. Without continuing to probe and ask clarifying questions, you might not uncover this issue. This does not mean that their response to you was appropriate, but it might give you a better frame with which to understand their reaction, particularly if it seemed out of character.
- After they finish speaking, it may be helpful for you to say something affirming. For example: "Thank you for your candor," or "I appreciate your willingness to share this with me." This sets a more positive tone and helps to establish trust. Be willing to express forgiveness. If God can forgive us each and every day, we must model that same type of forgiveness to those who work with us in God's church.
- You should summarize the issues as you now understand them.

While all of these steps may seem overboard, they may help to de-escalate a potentially emotionally charged situation and opens the door to constructive advice to resolve the conflict.

Now what should you do? You both have expressed what you believed happened and assuming the real issue is on the table, now you can work towards solutions. Sometimes the solution may require compromise but sometimes it may require you clearly stating what you expect needs to happen, what you are willing to do, and what they must do. Remember the "BRAVE" acronym from the previous section when considering solutions. It is important to come to an agreement and outline clearly what the next steps should be and how you will measure that. It is helpful to write out those steps and put due dates or timelines around them. Schedule a follow-up during the close of this meeting so the other person knows you are serious

and really intend to follow up. Invite them to ask you questions about this agreement and/or questions that may arise after the meeting. In this particular case, the employee was exhibiting behavior that should not be tolerated in any work environment, but especially a church. Your job, as a pastor-leader, is to make clear that while you might understand and even sympathize with personal issues, angry outbursts are not acceptable. Remember that while addressing issues of conflict can be challenging, it can also provide an opportunity for learning, reassessing, and maybe retraining or even reassigning. What you say and how you say it can leave a positive or negative "emotional wake", i.e., what people remember about how you handled a situation. In Ezekiel 36:26, God promised the Israelites that they would be spiritually revived, "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." Apply this to yourself and remember, how you approach conflict can have positive results.

Conflict can arise in many areas of the church and may require your skills for resolution. In this next section, we will address techniques for addressing conflict amongst your staff members/volunteers.

Conflict Between Staff Members/Volunteers Leaders

While you will never be able to eliminate all conflict, you can create an atmosphere of conflict management and resolution by your willingness to address issues as they arise. Avoiding the issue and hoping it will resolve itself may be wishful thinking on your part. With that said, when conflict arises between staff members/volunteer leaders, you should encourage them to attempt to talk through it and come up with a mutually agreed upon solution. I would also encourage you to offer training in this area for all staff members and your volunteers leaders before conflict arises so they have the tools needed to work towards resolutions.

You, as the pastor-leader, may not be aware that conflict is brewing between co-workers/volunteer leaders. A few signs of conflict may include increased absenteeism, increased turnover in paid staff and/or volunteer leaders, a reduction in productivity, and/or noticeable fluctuations in attitude. As you conduct your one-to-ones, it is important that you always ask them if there are any issues between them and their fellow co-workers or volunteer leaders that need to be addressed. If they say yes, and they have expressed their inability to come to a

satisfactory resolution, you will likely need to facilitate a conversation with the goal of resolving the conflict. Here are some suggested steps to assist in that facilitation:

- First, listen to each person separately and ask permission to take notes. Remember the steps you have practiced in resolving conflict between yourself and someone else. These steps apply when listening to both parties express what they perceive happened and what the issue may be. Remember to ask clarifying questions so that you can get at the heart of the matter.
- Second, once you have spoken to both parties and have what you believe is each person's perspective, bring the two (or more) parties together, open in prayer, and ask their permission to share what YOU perceive the issues are for the various parties.
- Third, you should set the ground rules. I call this the "adult contract". State that while each may feel emotional about this issue, blaming, shaming, and name calling are not allowed.
- Fourth, give each one an opportunity to confirm what you say or correct what you say without being interrupted by you or the other party involved. Give each the same courtesy. Many problems lay in misunderstandings, tones of voice, and body language. If you observe these, you need to make a note then point it out. Set clear expectations for how you expect them to practice reflective listening. For example: One person is listening to the other person's perception of the issue(s) and you notice arms crossed, eye rolling, sighing, etc. After that first party is done, you might want to say, "I notice you seemed upset or irritated by their comments" and then state why, "You sighed or rolled your eyes." Again, caution is warranted here as their reactions may be tied to how they process confrontation rather than a sign of rudeness. The most difficult part of this is keeping your own physical reactions neutral. If you sense that either party is becoming angry or frustrated, you might want to take a break and allow emotions to calm before proceeding.
- Fifth, once the facts are on the table so to speak, you need to see where there may be areas of similarity and divergence. Again, this requires very active listening and note taking on your part as you are acting as the facilitator. Point out these similarities and/or divergences and ask each of them if you misunderstood or if it is possible that they misunderstood the others intentions or reactions. This step can be very helpful in making

each party aware of how perceptions can color our reactions. The goal with this step is to identify the root cause.

- Sixth, ask them for solutions. Keep discussing solutions until you feel that they have reached a mutually acceptable plan. Sometimes an apology may be in order. An honest apology can go a long way toward mitigating conflict and creating the opportunity for resolution. You may need to prompt that apology. For example: John cannot finish the order of worship until he receives the music selections from Susan, the Director of Music Ministries, but Susan is often late in giving John this necessary information. John, in his frustration, yelled at Susan. Once you have identified that the real issue is the lateness, it is still incumbent upon you to express to John that yelling is not an acceptable way to express frustration and it would be helpful if he apologize to Susan for yelling and that Susan apologizes for the repeated lateness.
- Finally, if and when agreements are reached, write them down and then read them aloud. Make sure you have captured what was agreed to, the actions, the timing, and the follow-up steps.

What if you can't reach an agreement? You are the head of staff and as such you will now have to make a decision on behalf of both. You may need time to process this and pray on this so don't feel pressure to give them your expectations right at that moment, but do give them a short, reasonable time when you will relay to them your expectations as to the resolution along with the consequences if not followed. A solution is not to leave the conflict unresolved. You may need to create a compromise that allows both parties to feel heard, but that resolves the issue.

The process of conflict management and resolution is not easy and likely will take several attempts. However, there may be times when something has occurred that requires you to confront and take immediate action. It also important to know when you need to just let it go – this might be particularly true when working with volunteers. Both of these can be challenging for various reasons so we will examine each.

<u>When to Confront and Take Action</u>

While we would all like to believe that we will not be put in the position of having to confront and stop a situation and/or take a quick decisive action, that is probably wishful thinking. Over the course of my years in business and in ministry, I have either had to address an

issue on the spot or I have witnessed others taking this action. In both situations, there has been some egregious action on the part of an employee or volunteer. Examples of this can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An argument that is escalating into abusive language or physical action
- Breaking of a safety protocol that endangers the individual or another individual(s)
- Harassment of any kind
- Abuse of any kind
- Any action that is illegal or immoral

If, or when, you hear or witness any of these, you must confront the individual(s) and stop the action or verbal attack in its tracks. Some of these will be emotionally charged situations and you, as the pastor-leader, must remain calm and project a calm but firm presence. Several actions may be required on your part.

In the first example of an argument, and if both parties are equally at fault, I would suggest you send them home for the day. You should then prepare to have a tough but necessary conversation the next day. You might be able to resolve an escalating conflict but not in that moment.

In the second example of the safety protocol violation, you might have three options: 1) If this is a first-time offense and no injury occurred, retraining may be necessary, 2) If no injury occurred but they ignored safety protocols you may choose to write them up (see previous section on progressive discipline), or 3) injury occurred to another you may need to terminate. Caution is warranted here as you cannot terminate an employee if they are injured on the job, even if the injury was caused by their refusal to follow safety protocols.

In the case of harassment with paid staff and if you are not a direct witness, you may need to conduct an investigation to determine the validity of the accusation. If you are a direct witness, and depending on the nature and severity of the action, you may choose to either write up a discipline form with actions and retraining as necessary or make the decision to terminate. Harassment is a serious issue and cannot be tolerated with employees or volunteers.

In the last two examples, abuse or illegal activity, you, as a pastor-leader, and depending on your state laws, are most likely a mandated reporter and you will need to report the abuse or illegal activity to a state agency and you will need to terminate if it is an employee, or if it is a volunteer, remove them from their position and maybe even have them removed from the

congregation. In the case of an employee, when you have witnessed this and it is not second-hand knowledge or accusation, you must terminate the employee. If it is second-hand information you will need to investigate before taking permanent action but you should suspend that person while you are investigating.

None of these situations are pleasant and all may put you in a highly emotional state so make sure you are addressing your own reactions to these situations as well as informing those who may need to know what has transpired. Caution is warranted here. You may need to protect the privacy of the individual in question and thus not be able to share details of what occurred with others.

When to Let a Conflict Go

While I would advise you to always try to resolve conflicts, sometimes having repeated conversations that go nowhere are better off not having; knowing when to let something go can be just as important as knowing when to work towards resolution. The goal in conflict management is to reach a resolution. If you believe that engaging in further conflict resolution conversations will not bring about change or a satisfactory resolution, you may have reached a point where there is no "walking it back" so to speak. For example: You have spoken with one of your volunteer leaders several times about their unwillingness to except advice from you, and sometimes from other staff, but they seem to work well with their volunteer committee. In spite of numerous attempts at giving feedback, they have demonstrated that they are unwilling to change and you feel you are at an impasse. Now you are faced with a decision. Is it possible to move this person out of their volunteer leader position without creating more discord? Given that they are working well with other volunteers, you are concerned that moving them out of that position will create more conflict than it will resolve. There are no easy, pat answers here. Remember the introduction to this guide (found before the first chapter) where we discussed the difference between a sacred relationship versus a secular relationship? This is a sacred relationship that could be broken if not handled with great care and diplomacy. This is where you, as the pastor-leader, need to dig deep and spend time with God discerning the right action to take, and then take that action. You have been called to lead God's church and that means leading even when what you may be called to do or say is difficult and when you have to take a backseat to your own opinion. The overall health and welfare of your staff, your volunteers, and your

congregation are in God's hands but you may have to be the instrument that makes the tough call. All church leaders must pursue God's truth and help others to do the same.

In this example where your volunteer is unwilling to change but does not seem to be impacting other volunteers, you have a choice to make. You can let it go, accept you cannot change this individual, and do nothing, or you can choose to move them out of leadership. In this case, you have to let go of the concept of resolving the conflict between the two of you and your staff. If you decide you cannot let it go, you will need to take the hard step of moving this volunteer out of a leadership position. You will need to have a loving but firm conversation letting them know that this position requires more flexibility than they have be able to demonstrate, but give them appreciation for the work they have done. This will be very similar to the "termination" discussion in Module 2. Be prepared for them to express hurt and/or anger and allow them to have those feelings but do not feel that you must accommodate them. Your job is to oversee, steer, and assist the whole Body of Christ in your congregation so make this decision carefully.

Conclusion

We have just scratched the surface of this topic of conflict management and resolution. I have briefly explored what lies behind conflict, our biases, our backgrounds, our physical reactions, when conflict is good and bad, steps toward managing and resolving conflict, when to confront, and when to let go. But this is only a summary and a first step towards helping you understand conflict. I say this because I understand that many of us tend to get stuck in a rut of doing the same thing over and over again, even when the outcome is not optimal or not what we really desire. But often it is just easier to do what we know rather than trying something new. This applies to conflict – the ways we approach conflict as well as the ways in which we try to manage or resolve conflict. Sometimes we need to adapt to changing circumstances and when this happens, we may be reluctant to adapt. Why? Because change is hard. But in spite of that, or maybe because of that, we need to be open to the potential that conflict can lead us to change and not all change is bad – some change may be necessary and even transformative. If and when we can quiet that voice in our head that tells us to run or to seek out easy solutions to complex issues of conflict, we can open ourselves to explore something new. Terasa Cooley, in her book *Transforming Conflict*, speaks about building congregational capacity, and I would like to

suggest these concepts can be applied to pastor-leaders, especially in the area of conflict. She states that building capacity is developing:

- the capacity to see (to pay attention to) what is really in front of us and what we are really doing.
- the capacity to integrate, to bring pieces together to help the whole make sense.
- the capacity to engage dilemmas, to not shy away from the challenging questions.
- the capacity to make complexity a friend, allowing multiple versions of truth to coexist with one another.
- the capacity to hear and engage multiple voices.[39]

As we develop these new capacities, we may find that rather than avoiding conflict, we learn how to lean into conflict such that we can begin to believe that situations of conflict may be opportunities to change. That change may be in how you respond to and handle conflict. That change may be in how your staff and volunteers have come to respond and handle conflict. And/or it may be that as you develop these capacities, you open your mind to possibilities that you can become more adaptive in your leadership style and show, by example, that adaptation is not a bad thing. The more you learn to address, manage, and resolve conflict, the more chances you will have to decide if the conflict is really a representation of something that just needs to change. Change can be transformative, positive, revelatory, and promote growth. Don't be afraid of it. As Mahatma Gandhi says, "Peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to cope with it."

[39] Cooley, *Transforming Conflict*, 96.

Section IV - The Basics of Church Finances

Part of a pastor-leader's responsibility is to have an understanding of the basics of church finance. While I would say that the pastor-leader should never be the one to count and/or review incoming donations, nor should they be signing outgoing checks, they are ultimately responsible to God and to the congregation for adherence to good financial procedures. These financial procedures touch all areas of the church as the generosity of your congregation make the mission and vision of the church possible. Furthermore, good financial stewardship is a biblical principle. For example, we read in the Old Testament these verses:

> **17** all shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you. (Deuteronomy 16:17)
>
> **9**Honor the Lord with your substance
> and with the first fruits of all your produce; (Proverbs 3:9)
>
> **8** Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, "How are we robbing you?" In your tithes and offerings! **9** You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you! **10** Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. (Malachi 3:8-10)

And in the New Testament, we read these:

> **19** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19-20)
>
> **10** Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. (I Peter 4:10)
>
> **2** Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. (I Corinthians 4:2)

All of this is to say that God is the provider of all good things, including the church, and we are responsible to God for these gifts we have been so graciously given. Good stewardship of God's gifts is a biblical principle we are called to practice. These resources that we manage belong to God and we will be held accountable for the faithful utilization of the same. This principle should make us determined to be prayerful leaders of integrity, imagination, and faith as we

steward the resources God has given us in our church. A good understanding of the basic principles of finance, both personally and from the perspective of church, will enable you, as the pastor-leader, to be better equipped to lead those under your care and under your employ.

In this section, we will briefly explain how non-profits (churches) are treated by the government for tax purposes, how fund accounting differs from accounting in a for-profit company, the purpose and use of the balance sheet and income statement, how to look at the different ways to create and utilize a budget, placing important financial controls to safeguard these resources, and ending with a brief look at how to plan for generous giving within the church. Let's begin by looking at how churches are treated by both the federal and state taxing agencies, and how to maintain the integrity of our non-profit status.

Taxation for Non-Profits (Churches) 501(c)(3)

The IRS (Internal Revenue Service) publication #1828 addresses most areas of taxation as it applies to churches and to pastors. It says this:

> "Congress has enacted special tax laws that apply to churches, religious organizations and ministers in recognition of their unique status in American society and of their rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Churches and religious organizations are generally exempt from income tax and receive other favorable treatment under the tax law; however, certain income of a church or religious organization may be subject to tax, such as income from an unrelated business."[40]

Furthermore, assuming that you are organized as a non-profit based on IRS regulations, churches (including integrated auxiliaries and conventions or associations of churches) that meet the requirements of 501(c)(3) status are not required to file an annual return or notice with the IRS. Therefore, these organizations are exempt from filing annual returns. This also holds true for the state of California, but please check your state requirements as they may differ from that of California.

[40] IRS, *Tax Guide for Churches & Religious Organizations*, Publication 1828 (Rev. 8-2015) Catalog Number 21096G Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service, www.irs.gov/ Introduction.

However, there are instances where income may become taxable both federally and by the state. This is referred to as unrelated business income tax (UBIT).
The IRS states the following:

> Churches and religious organizations, like other tax-exempt organizations, may engage in income-producing activities unrelated to their tax-exempt purposes, as long as the unrelated activities aren't a substantial part of the organization's activities. However, the net income from these activities will be subject to the UBIT if the following three conditions are met:
>
> The activity constitutes a trade or business, the trade or business is regularly carried on, and the trade or business is not substantially related to the organization's exempt purpose. (The fact that the organization uses the income to further its charitable or religious purposes does not make the activity substantially related to its exempt purposes.)
>
> **Exceptions to UBIT**
>
> Even if an activity meets the above criteria, the income may not be subject to tax if it meets one of the following exceptions: (a) substantially all the work in operating the trade or business is performed by volunteers, (b) the activity is conducted by the organization primarily for the convenience of its members or (c) the trade or business involves the selling of merchandise substantially all of which was donated. In general, rents from real property, royalties, capital gains, interest, and dividends aren't subject to the unrelated business income tax unless financed with borrowed money.[41]

These two statements by the IRS clearly state that almost all the income received from churches, i.e. donations, income from a cell tower for example, and tuition from a Christian-based school on your property will be exempt from taxes. Where you, as the pastor-leader, need to be aware is if your church is receiving income from a for-profit company or an individual for services related to your facilities rather than your real estate and that income may be subject to income tax. For example, if you rent your fellowship hall to a for-profit company that is holding a reception, that income would likely be taxable. If this is the case, your church will be required to file a tax return. Failure to do so can endanger your tax-exempt status. The exception to this is payroll taxes and payroll tax returns. Each church that has paid staff will need to withhold and remit payroll taxes in a timely fashion. Pastors have special tax exemptions as it pertains to certain taxes and how their income is taxed. This information is readily availability in IRS publication 1828, pages 22 and 23.

[41] Ibid, 19.

For most churches, this will not be an issue, but is important for the pastor-leader and the finance/accounting staff and volunteer leaders to be made aware. What is important is for the pastor-leader to understand an overview of how the structure of the accounting systems and reports differ from that of a for-profit company, and how that impacts the financial management of the church. This is called "fund accounting" and the guidelines, just like for-profit accounting, are governed by the General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) which is the standard adopted by the United States.

Fund Accounting

Fund accounting is simply a system designed to accurately track the incoming sources of money and how those sources are assigned to different purposes and spent for those same purposes. In a for-profit company, you would have revenue (income) minus expenses and the net result would be a profit or a loss for the company. For churches, fund accounting is not for the purpose of tracking a "profit" or surplus, but rather how the funds are designated by the donor and then allocated or spent by the church. Funds are normally categorized as unrestricted or restricted. An example of unrestricted funds would be those donations given for the normal operating expenses of the church in the form of a pledge or plate offering. A restricted fund would be a donation that has specified restrictions on it that can be both in terms of usage, investment, and time or some combination thereof. For instance, you need to replace the roof of the sanctuary and you launch a campaign to raise funds for this purpose. Those donating to this particular area would designate their donation for the "reroofing fund" and those funds should only be used for the reroofing project.

At times, you may receive a bequeath from an estate that has restrictions. For example, you may receive funds that are designated for refurbishing the sanctuary. You would need to reflect somewhere in your financial reports or minutes of your Session that this estate gift is in a restricted fund designated for this purpose. Or the estate might state that you must invest this bequeathment in an interest-bearing account and use only the interest generated annually. If there are no restrictions around the annual interest received, that interest could be recorded in the non-restricted general fund, but the principle would remain in a restricted fund.

Most churches will have a variety of funds – both unrestricted and restricted. It can become cumbersome if you have many restricted funds as you will need to keep track of the

wishes of the donors for these funds. I recommend you limit the number of restricted funds allowed into broad areas of use within the mission of the church. For example, you might suggest to your congregation that if they choose to give to a restricted or designated fund that it not be so specific as to limit the church's ability to access those funds. This requires a bit of education of your congregation as most will not have an understanding of fund accounting requirements.

There are many accounting software programs that are specifically designed for churches or are easily adopted to this type of accounting. All will have a basic chart of accounts which are numbers assigned to a specific category of accounts and a specific number within that category. For example, 1000 groups most often includes all asset accounts. Cash in the general account might be 1001. The use of the Chart of Accounts helps ensure that the correct account is selected for donations and expenses both in unrestricted and restricted funds. An example of the standard numbering system used for a Chart of Accounts can be seen below.

- 1000- numbers would include all asset accounts – cash, investments, fixed assets
- 2000- numbers include all liability accounts – loans, payables due
- 3000- numbers include all net asset accounts – restricted and unrestricted designated funds
- 4000- numbers include all income accounts – pledges received, plate contributions, other income
- 5000- numbers include all operating expense accounts – personnel, property, programs
- 6000- numbers include all non-operating expense accounts – interest expense on loans

In addition, most churches utilize what is known as the cash method for recognizing both income and expense. The cash method will recognize and record the income when received and the expense when paid. The accrual method, often used by for-profit companies, requires you to accrue expenses you have incurred even if they are not yet paid, and income even if not yet received. The income accrual is difficult for churches because while they have pledges for a certain amount annually, they may or may not know when to expect them and the pledge is a promise but is not enforceable. Neither method affects your ability to use fund accounting.

Fund accounting will impact how your balance sheet will look, as well as your income statements and budgeting approaches. Let's start with the balance sheet.

The Balance Sheet and How to Understand It

The balance sheet is a snapshot in time of the financial health of the church, and yes, it should always balance. The components (titles of the accounts) of the balance sheet may or may not remain the same but the layout of the balance sheet should be consistent. In a church or nonprofit, the balance sheet will have three broad areas – Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets.

Assets = Liabilities + Net Assets

Compare this to a for profit company:

Assets = Liabilities + Equity

These two are very similar but in a church, the "equity" becomes the "net assets." Let me explain these terms.

Assets are the total of all the tangible and intangible items. Intangible items would be cash and savings, and are often referred to as current assets that are both liquid (available at any moment) and illiquid (invested or restricted in some way). The tangible items, also known as physical items or fixed assets, are the land, the buildings, and the equipment. Part of the physical assets is an account called depreciation. This account assumes some declining value of the assets over time and is represented as a negative number. **Please note, not all churches choose to record depreciation as they do not reflect this on their income statements.** Liabilities are monies owed to someone. Normally, this is some type of outstanding debt i.e., a loan. Assuming you are utilizing the cash method, the liability section of your balance sheet will normally reflect only liabilities that will be paid out over some period of time. This time period could be less than a year or more than a year depending on the nature of the debt. If the time period is longer than one year, you may choose to label this as a long-term liability. Net Assets are all the monies in both your unrestricted funds and your restricted funds as well as the net value of your fixed assets minus depreciation. An example of a simplified balance sheet can be found at the end of this chapter. For the purposes of this example, I have included depreciation, but kept the designated funds to a bare minimum.

What to Look For in the Balance Sheet

As previously stated, the balance sheet is a snapshot of one point in time, but should be reviewed by the pastor-leader and the volunteer leadership monthly. The balance sheet indicates a statement of the financial position of the church. Reviewing the assets, liabilities, and net assets (net worth) on a stated date shows the reviewer where the church is financially and where it has been (what is owned vs. what is owed). Typically, you would see changes only in the current asset portion of the balance sheet as donations are received and monies are spent and a reduction in the principal balance of a loan liability if payments are made monthly. The changes in these balances are reflective of what is happening within your income statement (statement of activities). Declining current assets is indicative that you are spending more than you are receiving, in either your unrestricted or restricted funds month over month. This would be a warning sign that expenses may need to be cut, and/or you may want to make an appeal to your congregation to make sure their pledged donations are current. If you continue to see declining current assets and have investments, you will likely need to withdraw money from your investments to cover the possibility of a negative cash balance in your operating account.

While balance sheets are helpful, your income statements will provide you with more detailed information on the financial activities by account within the church. They can assure you and your congregation that what you projected to happen via a budget at the beginning of the year is happening or not happening. This is a crucial tool in quickly assessing any changes that may need to be made, as well as a warning sign if fraud is occurring. Let's examine the components of the income statements.

Income Statements

Income statements, also known as statements of activities, can be formatted in several different ways. You can have a statement that reflects all the income received from whatever category, including designated funds (restricted an unrestricted), that are not for the general expenses of the church and all the associated expenses over a set period of time (normally a month). You can also have two statements. One that reflects the income for your general fund operations – both pledge and plate - and any recurring or miscellaneous income, but not contributions made to specific designated funds. You would also have all of your normal operating expenses that are mostly recurring and are part of the day-to-day operations of the

church. This statement would reflect an increase to your cash if income is greater than expense or a decrease to your cash if income is less than expense. This allows you, as the pastor-leader, to know month-to-month how well you are managing and matching your income to your expenses. The second statement that would reflect the changes to designated funds, both income and expense. I recommend separating these statements so that you do not rely on your designated funds for normal program expenses.

You may choose, and I would recommend that you track, what you budgeted for each category by month and compare that to what was actually received or spent. This will increase your accuracy in budgeting for the future. It also allows you to know if expense reduction may be required or if income is such that you may project an excess of income. This projected excess income can be used as a reserve or indicate the possibility for an increase in program expenses for the following year. An example of a simplified Income Statement and Designated Fund Statement can be found at the end of this chapter.

What to Look For in the Income Statements

Posting to the correct income/expense account is critical for accurate income statements. As you review your income statements, you should look for income or expenses that seem to be overstated or understated as compared to the budget and/or previous periods. When you notice this, you should ask the person responsible for your accounting to print a detail of what occurred in that particular account(s). For example, your normal utilities expense averages $1000.00 per month and is budgeted for the same. In reviewing the statement, you notice that utilities are $1500.00. This should be flagged and a detail of the account examined. You may find that the account is correct but you cannot account for the increase in usage. Perhaps you have an undetected water leak or your HVAC system is being left on when no one is on premises. You may also discover that there has been a mispost – the wrong account number was selected and $500.00 of this expense really belongs in maintenance and repair. A close examination of your income statements can help ensure that your financial/accounting person is posting both income and expense in their proper categories.

While we never want to think that fraud can occur within a church, unfortunately that is not the case. A clever person can easily get around a lack of financial controls. For example, your financial/accounting person could generate a phony invoice, pay that invoice, and pocket the

money. They may do this repeatedly in small increments to avoid detection but you have a better chance of catching this if you have solid financial controls in place.

Financial Controls

Financial controls, often referenced as accounting controls, are essential in any organization. The purpose of these controls is to manage risk and human error within any organization, and a church is no different. The purpose of these controls are fourfold:

- They ensure that all of the financial statements are an accurate representation of the church's financial position, health, and cash flow.
- They guard against improper posting or fraud.
- They assist in the church achieving its mission and vision.
- They ensure that all the appropriate financial regulations are met.

Good financial controls benefit all and assure the congregation that their donations are being properly safeguarded and utilized. Standard controls will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Background checks, including credit reports, should be used for your paid accounting staff. Keep in mind, some states may prohibit certain background checks so check with your HR person in this regard.
- Two people, besides your accounting person, should count and record the cash offerings. This job should be rotated so the same two people are not always the ones counting.
- All checks received should be immediately stamped "for deposit only" and placed in a secure place until they can be deposited.
- If filling out a deposit slip that includes cash, that slip should be verified by someone other than the accounting person.
- You should be sending out a regular statement of donations so that your congregation can double check what they have given to what has been recorded.
- Any check issued should be signed by someone other than the accounting person. A two-signature requirement is good, but often not recognized by banks.
- Any check prepared for signature should have a copy of the bill attached for verification and should be authorized by someone other than the accounting person. This should be

utilized for any reimbursements paid to a staff member or volunteer. Note: this may not be the case with recurring bills like a mortgage payment or utilities.

- Payroll hours should be authorized and verified by the direct supervisor prior to the payroll issuance.
- You should have someone, normally a volunteer leader, who is your treasurer and is very familiar with accounting and accounting controls to review all statements monthly. This person should also verify that payroll deposits have been made and all insurances have been paid in a timely fashion.
- Full financial disclosure of your financial statements should be presented to the congregation no less than annually, but I would recommend quarterly.
- Your bank account(s) should be reconciled monthly and reviewed by someone other than the accounting person.
- You should require an annual financial review of all controls, all statements, all payroll returns.
- I recommend that you use an outside payroll company for the preparation of payroll and remittance of taxes and statements to ensure this is done properly and on time.

An old article in *Christianity Today* labeled "Tithes and Temptations" said this:

> The shock and sadness of discovering church theft is never easy to bear. It is small consolation that the problem of religious embezzlement is at least as old as Judas Iscariot, the keeper of the money bag for Jesus' disciples, who helped himself to its contents (John 12:6). Even in today's church, people are not immune to the temptation of taking what does not belong to them.[42]

While we never want to believe it can happen in our churches, it has and it may, but solid financial controls can safeguard against this temptation. Your job, as the pastor-leader, is not to necessarily be the one to oversee these controls but it is your job to make sure the controls are in place and you have trusted people to oversee those controls and report back to you if anything seems out of the ordinary. While this is a long list of financial controls, you will likely find that

[42] John W. Helfrich, Christianity Today, "Tithes and Temptations," May 17, 1985, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1985/may-17/ministries-tithes-and-temptations.html/ (accessed August 17, 2023).

many already exist within your church. Reviewing this list with your volunteer leaders responsible for the finances of the churches is highly recommended.

Budgets

We begin this section with a simple definition of the word budget. A budget is simply an educated estimate of income expected to be received and expenses expected to be paid over some set period of time. You may be very familiar with this concept as many people have personal budgets that they used for tracking monthly income and expenses. Budgets are often used in long-term financial planning, especially for retirement. In a church environment, budgets can be helpful in the planning process to determine what is needed to cover current and projected expenses, what can be used for the projects that advance the mission and vision of the church, and where programs can be increased or decreased depending on changes to the mission and vision. Budgets can take many forms so let's examine a few.

Zero-Based Budgets

Zero-based budgets is a budgeting approach that involves developing a new budget from scratch every time (i.e., starting from "zero") versus starting with the previous period's budget and adjusting it as needed. This is the type of budget is utilized by the executive branch of our government. Funds not used are not recouped but rather lost. The advantage of this type of budget is it forces those creating the planning of the budget to determine if a particular resource is really needed and if so, how much should be allocated.[43] And, in theory, this forces decision-makers to constantly look at the business of the church with fresh eyes, free from the limitations of past assumptions and targets. The disadvantage is it takes much more time, and often forces monies to be spent even when not necessary. This is not a budgeting method often utilized by churches.

Line-Item Budgets

A line-item budget is a form of budget preparation and presentation that groups proposed expenses by department or cost center. This method of aggregation more easily

[43] Welch, *Church Administration*, 168.

shows which departments and cost centers are absorbing the bulk of a church's funds. This presentation shows the actual expenditure or budget from the prior period for comparison purposes so that one can quickly see if there are significant changes budgeted from the prior period. This format represents an easier way to roll the budget into a new period. The disadvantage of this type of budgeting is that it may encourage users to not dig more deeply into the numbers, so that existing budgets tend to be repeated into the future. This tends to result in expenditure levels that support the current manner in which a church is operating rather than allowing for changes in the various departments, projects, and missions of the church.[44] Another disadvantage to this type of budget is that those creating and monitoring the budget tend to increase or cut programs across all categories without thought to a more proportional change that matches changes within the church. While this type of budgeting is often used, I think the last budget we will discuss, a ministry action budget, is the most flexible and therefore, more valuable.

Ministry Action Budget

A ministry action budget is a combination of the best of both of the previously discussed budgets. Like a zero-based budget, it requires that staff and volunteer leaders for the various programs of the church examine what is planned for the upcoming year and decide what to keep, decrease, or increase the budgeted expense for this area. And similar to the line-item budget, there will be recurring expenses, like facility related expenses, payroll perhaps, office expenses, insurance, etc., that will be carried forward without too much review. A ministry action budget asks that leadership decide what are the priority items in the budget based on the mission and vision of the church. For example, the church leadership may have decided that a greater effort is needed in community outreach, serving the poor and disenfranchised on the community, and thus expand the budget allocation for this area. Depending on the generosity of the congregation in pledging and the good stewardship of resources, you may or may not need to cut the budget in other program areas. This type of budgeting is very flexible but engages the leadership and the congregation in having a more targeted use of their financial resources.

[44] Accounting Tools, Inc. Accounting, CPE Courses and Books, https://www.accountingtools.com/articles/line-item-budget/ (accessed August 18, 2023).

Typically, the budget preparation will no longer reside with just the treasurer, financial leader, or pastor but all of leadership will review the previous year's budget. They will determine if goals were met and will continue, if new goals should be added, and what resources, both in terms of finances and volunteers, will be needed. This makes the budgeting process more holistic as it is not just looking at financial resources but also human resources. It may also take changing economic conditions, expected increases or decreases in expenses, and even possible upcoming capital repairs into account. The goal of budgeting is to end the year with at least the income equal to the expenses, but on occasion you may decide to budget for a deficit, knowing that the investment in a particular person or program will take time to produce fruit. Here is an example of a step-by-step approach:

- Start with the core functions of the church that are necessary for survival, i.e., clergy payroll and staff payroll and associated taxes and allowance, ongoing property and administrative expenses like utilities, office supplies, insurance, landscape, etc.
- Examine the programs of the church based on previous leadership discussions based on mission/vision focus.
- Estimate normal cost increases.
- Estimate known maintenance and repair needs.
- Using the above, identity the "breakeven point", i.e., income is equal to expenses.
- Examine congregational giving and determine if there will be any anticipated increases or decreases.
- Create a first draft of the budget based on the above and adjust accordingly.

An example of a simplified budget planning sheet can be found at the end of this chapter.

As we consider all of the financial implications of good financial reporting, financial controls, and budgets it is important to consider how we approach the concept and process of stewardship in the church as it relates to the congregations responsibilities and desires to give generously.

Stewardship

Stewardship in the church is often thought of as that time of year when either the pastor or someone involved in the leadership of church asks the members to pledge for the following year. If your church is like many others, this will likely occur in the early fall, perhaps around

September. Many pastors and congregational members dread this time of year. It makes both parties nervous and uncomfortable talking about money. But ironically, the scriptures speaks about money and possessions frequently. And perhaps we, as preachers of the Word, relate stewardship as pertaining to money, and that is certainly part of it, but stewardship is more than giving money. The act of being of good steward is the faithful use of all resources, both tangible and intangible, given to us by God. All we have is "on loan" to us by God and we are charged to manage these items in a manner befitting our honor, love, and respect of our Holy God.

When we choose to give financial gifts to our church, we are choosing to give to those who are charged with managing those gifts such that the mission and vision of the church is realized in reaching the world with the message of love, grace, and mercy of God. Dave Briggs, in his article titled "What I Wish I Had Known about Stewardship," states that as the leaders of God's church and stewards of the same, we should spend more time teaching about money, not less. He says this:

> When I became a stewardship pastor, I was shocked to discover how much people were struggling financially. Money is an emotional topic, so people want to hide their financial struggles. They often feel they are not in a position to be generous. Avoiding the topic of money only deepens the problem. Preaching frequently about money creates a greater willingness in your people to address their financial health.[45]

Briggs goes on to speak to about the three aspects of money that you should be teaching your congregation. They are as follows:

- ***"The practical aspect:*** This involves teaching people how to organize their finances and manage their money.
- ***The emotional aspect:*** This is rarely addressed and usually leads to bad financial decisions. When it comes to money, if the heart overrules the head, the result is frequently disastrous. Just follow teenagers around the mall to see what I mean.
- ***The spiritual aspect:*** Your people will never be good stewards if they do not align their financial decision making with the wisdom of God's Word. It's that simple"[46]

I agree with these three aspects and I would remind pastor-leaders that as good stewards of God's good gifts, we have an obligation to teach our congregation the type of impact their

[45] Dave Briggs, "What I Wish I Had Known about Stewardship," *Christianity Today*, August 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/august-web-exclusives/what-i-wish-i-had-known-about-stewardship.html/ (accessed August 19, 2023).

[46] Ibid.

relationship with money can have on their relationship with God, and that stewardship is not just an event that occurs in the fall. Stewardship is happening all the time. Every time we make a decision about the use of our resources we are acting as stewards. God calls us to be good stewards and to be good stewards is to acknowledge the teaching in the scriptures and to understand that the financial support of the church rests on the shoulders of the Body of Christ.

We, as the pastor-leaders, need to rethink the concept of stewardship for ourselves. We need to boldly address money and finances and make the theological connections for our congregations. We have a responsibility to our congregations to make very clear both the warnings and blessings in scripture with regards to financial resources. But the first step rests with you as the pastor-leader. You must ask yourself what is your theology of stewardship. Do you see generosity as a spiritual discipline? It is and it should be taught to our churches as just that. Once we can build around that concept, it becomes easier to shift the mindset and move the concept of stewardship as a year-round activity, not just in the fall. I know this is easier said than done and it will require an investment of time both in your preaching and in your teaching, but the rewards for your congregation and their own relationship with money could benefit.

Conclusion

This chapter has been a brief exploration of church finances with the goal of increasing your financial literacy as it relates to the church. I would remind you that as the pastor-leader, you do not need to have mastery over all transactional steps that create your financial reports. What you need to know is how to interpret those reports so they can guide you and your leadership team in planning for the future. Just like with stewardship, good financial principles are biblical and help you and your congregation truly become the hands and feet of Jesus.

Example Balance Sheet

HAPPYLAND Church
Balance Sheet
8/31/2023

	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
General Checking	$25,000.00
Money Market - Savings	$50,000.00
Schwaab Investments	$100,000.00
Restricted (Designated) Funds	$200,000.00
Subtotal Current Assets	**$375,000.00**
Fixed Assets	
Land and Buildings	$1,750,000.00
Office Equipment	$100,000.00
Audio/Visual Equipment	$50,000.00
Less Accumulated Depreciation	-$350,000.00
Subtotal Fixed Assets	**$1,550,000.00**
TOTAL ASSETS	**$1,925,000.00**
LIABILITIES	
None	$0.00
Total Liabilities	**$0.00**
NET ASSETS (FUND BALANCES)	
Unrestricted Funds	
General Fund (including Net Fixed Assets)	$1,625,000.00
Physical Plant Reserve	$0.00
Schwaab Investment	$100,000.00
Subtotal Unrestricted Funds	**$1,725,000.00**
Restrictied Funds	
Mission Fund	$50,000.00
Sanctuary Renovation Fund	$75,000.00
Youth/Student Ministry	$25,000.00
Estate gift fund	$50,000.00
Subtotal Restricted Funds	**$200,000.00**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES (NET ASSETS)	**$1,925,000.00**

Example Income Statement

HAPPYLAND CHURCH
STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR AUGUST 31, 2023

	CURRENT PERIOD ACTUAL	CURRENT BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET DIFFERENCE	YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL	YEAR TO DATE BUDGET	YTD BUDGET DIFFERENCE
INCOME TYPE						
CONTRIBUTIONS						
Pledged	$23,125.00	$22,000.00	$1,125.00	$172,000.00	$176,000.00	-$4,000.00
Non-Pledged (Plate)	$3,000.00	$2,500.00	$500.00	$24,000.00	$20,000.00	$4,000.00
Subtotal Contributions	$26,125.00	$24,500.00	$1,625.00	$196,000.00	$196,000.00	$0.00
Other Income						
Cell tower rent	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$0.00	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	$0.00
Subtotal Other Income	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$0.00	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	$0.00
TOTAL INCOME	$27,625.00	$26,000.00	$1,625.00	**$208,000.00**	$208,000.00	$0.00
EXPENSES						
OPERATIONS						
Personnel						
Minister Wages/Allowances	$10,000.00	$7,500.00	$2,500.00	$80,000.00	$80,000.00	$0.00
Hourly/Salary Wages	$6,500.00	$6,000.00	$500.00	$47,500.00	$48,000.00	-$500.00
Employer Taxes	$497.00	$459.00	$38.00	$3,634.00	$3,672.00	-$38.00
Pension/Health	$3,000.00	$3,000.00	$0.00	$24,000.00	$24,000.00	$0.00
Misc.(Travel, Subs, etc)	$75.00	$150.00	-$75.00	$600.00	$1,200.00	-$600.00
Subtotal Personnel	$20,072.00	$17,109.00	$2,963.00	$155,734.00	$156,872.00	-$1,138.00
Facilities Management						
Utilities	$1,200.00	$1,000.00	$200.00	$9,800.00	$8,000.00	$1,800.00
Repairs/Maintenance	$400.00	$200.00	$200.00	$2,000.00	$1,600.00	$400.00
Janitorial	$500.00	$500.00	$0.00	$4,000.00	$4,000.00	$0.00
Landscape	$500.00	$500.00	$0.00	$4,000.00	$4,000.00	$0.00
Misc.	$0.00	$100.00	-$100.00	$250.00	$800.00	-$550.00
Subtotal Facilities Management	$2,600.00	$2,300.00	$300.00	$20,050.00	$18,400.00	$1,650.00
Business Administration						
Insurance	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	$0.00	$12,000.00	$8,000.00	$4,000.00
Office Supplies	$75.00	$100.00	-$25.00	$650.00	$800.00	-$150.00
Telephone/Internet	$625.00	$700.00	-$75.00	$5,000.00	$5,600.00	-$600.00
Postage	$325.00	$275.00	$50.00	$2,300.00	$2,200.00	$100.00
Misc.	$75.00	$100.00	-$25.00	$625.00	$800.00	-$175.00
Subtotal Business Administration	$2,100.00	$2,175.00	-$75.00	$20,575.00	$17,400.00	$3,175.00

Example Income Statement (continued)

	CURRENT PERIOD ACTUAL	CURRENT BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET DIFFERENCE	YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL	YEAR TO DATE BUDGET	YTD BUDGET DIFFERENCE
SUBTOTAL OPERATIONS	$24,772.00	$21,584.00	$3,188.00	$196,359.00	$192,672.00	$3,687.00
PROGRAM EXPENSES						
Worship	$300.00	$400.00	-$100.00	$3,200.00	$4,800.00	-$1,600.00
Children/Sudent Ministries	$350.00	$200.00	$150.00	$2,500.00	$1,600.00	$900.00
Spiritual Formation	$150.00	$100.00	$50.00	$700.00	$800.00	-$100.00
Outreach/Fellowship	$200.00	$300.00	-$100.00	$1,800.00	$2,400.00	-$600.00
Subtotal Program Expenses	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	$0.00	$8,200.00	$9,600.00	-$1,400.00
MISC INTEREST EXPENSE	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	$25,772.00	$22,584.00	$3,188.00	**$204,559.00**	$202,272.00	$2,287.00
EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES	$1,853.00	$3,416.00	-$1,563.00	**$3,441.00**	$5,728.00	-$2,287.00

Example Designated Fund Statement

HAPPYLAND DESIGNATED FUND STATEMENT
AUGUST 31,2023

DESIGNATED FUND INCOME	CURRENT PERIOD	YEAR TO DATE
Mission Fund	$ 500.00	$ 3,500.00
Sanctuary Renovation Fund	$ 1,000.00	$ 8,200.00
Youth/Student Ministry	$ 250.00	$ 1,000.00
Estate gift fund	$ -	$ -
	$ 1,750.00	$ 12,700.00
DESIGNATED FUND EXPENSE		
Mission Fund	$ 100.00	$ 2,950.00
Sanctuary Renovation Fund	$ -	$ -
Youth/Student Ministry	$ 1,500.00	$ 8,000.00
Estate gift fund	$ -	$ -
	$ 1,600.00	$ 10,950.00
EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES	**$ 150.00**	**$ 1,750.00**

Example Budget

HAPPYLAND CHURCH
BUDGET WORKSHEET

Category		2023 Proposed Budget		2022 Actuals		2022 Adopted Budget
INCOME						
Pledged		$ 264,200.00		$ 266,000.00		$ 264,500.00
Non Pledged		$ 30,000.00		$ 31,000.00		$ 30,000.00
Other Income		$ 18,000.00		$ 17,000.00		$ 16,000.00
Total Income		**$ 312,200.00**		**$ 314,000.00**		**$ 310,500.00**
EXPENSES						
All Personnel Expense		$ 247,900.00		$ 247,900.00		$ 247,900.00
Utilities		$ 12,000.00		$ 11,500.00		$ 12,000.00
Repairs/Maintenance		$ 2,400.00		$ 3,800.00		$ 4,000.00
Janitorial		$ 6,000.00		$ 5,200.00		$ 5,000.00
Landscape		$ 6,000.00		$ 6,000.00		$ 5,500.00
Insurance		$ 12,000.00		$ 10,000.00		$ 10,000.00
Office Supplies		$ 1,200.00		$ 1,250.00		$ 1,000.00
Telephone/Internet		$ 8,400.00		$ 9,100.00		$ 9,000.00
Postage		$ 4,300.00		$ 4,700.00		$ 4,500.00
Worship		$ 4,800.00		$ 5,200.00		$ 5,000.00
Children/Student Ministries		$ 2,400.00		$ 2,600.00		$ 2,400.00
Spiritual Formation		$ 1,200.00		$ 1,200.00		$ 1,200.00
Outreach/Fellowship		$ 3,600.00		$ 3,800.00		$ 3,000.00
Total Expenses		**$ 312,200.00**		**$ 312,250.00**		**$ 310,500.00**
Excess Income/Expense				$ 1,750.00		$ -

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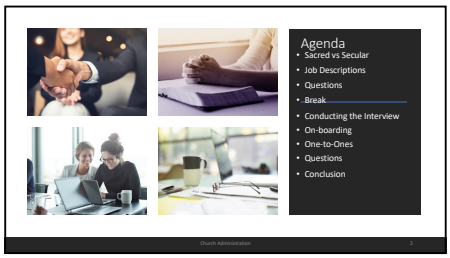
Appendix J: PowerPoint Slides from Workshops

Module 1 PowerPoint Slides

11/19/23

1



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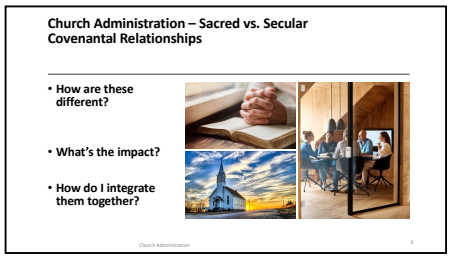
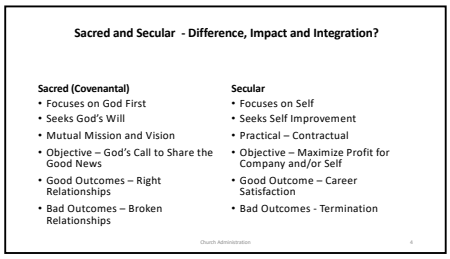

Church Administration – Sacred vs. Secular Covenantal Relationships
• How are these different?
• What's the impact?
• How do I integrate them together?

3


Sacred and Secular - Difference, Impact and Integration?
Sacred (Covenantal)
• Focuses on God First
• Seeks God's Will
• Mutual Mission and Vision
• Objective – God's Call to Share the Good News
• Good Outcomes – Right Relationships
• Bad Outcomes – Broken Relationships
Secular
• Focuses on Self
• Seeks Self Improvement
• Practical – Contractual
• Objective – Maximize Profit for Company and/or Self
• Good Outcome – Career Satisfaction
• Bad Outcomes - Termination

4

Where Do we Begin?
First Things First
• New to the church, the role, or first-time leadership position
• What currently exists - Personnel and Volunteers
• Assuming Policies and Procedures exist – read them
• Assuming Job Descriptions exist – read them
• Why Bother?
• What should you keep?
• What should you discard?
• What should you develop?
• What are the Elements of Good Administration ?

5

6

What are "Essential Functions"?

- Most critical part of a job description – Why?
- Inputs, Actions, Outcomes
  - Think in terms of "actions" required – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
  - Start with action verb
  - List them in order of importance
  - Eight to Ten but should not exceed Twelve
  - Examples – Your turn Director of Music Ministries
  - Multi-tasking – Exercise
  - Example of Job Description

7

Other Duties/Responsibilities, Necessary Qualifications, and Physical Demands

- Other Duties/Responsibilities
  - Attend meetings, participate in retreats, etc.
- Necessary Qualifications
  - Separate Education from Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
- Physical Demands
  - Standard statement

** The example shown of a completed Job Description will be in the written guide you will received after training.

8

Why are Job Descriptions Important?

- It's Biblical
- Helps You Maintain Objectivity
  - Balance the Fulcrum – Sacred vs Secular
  - Basis for Reviewing Performance
  - Basis for Creating Goals
- Utilized for Interviews, Hiring, and Wages

9

Pros and Cons Congregational Members as Paid Staff

Pros	Cons
• More likely to be aligned with Mission and Vision • Knows the strengths/weaknesses of congregation	• Discipline or Termination leads to exit • May not be as vested in the overall success

Suggestions/Solutions? – Your ideas

10

How Does this Apply to Volunteers?

- Understand whatever structure currently exists
- Create a Job Description similar to paid staff
  - Purpose Statement
  - Essential Functions
- Recruitment
  - Statistics
  - Volunteer Application Example

** An example of a Volunteer Application will be in the written guide you will received after training.

11

12

Interviewing Strategies

13

A Spiritual Endeavor?

- Being Biblically Organized
  - Grounded in Prayer
  - Seek Discernment
  - Listen for the voice of the Spirit
  - Remember the sacred nature of your call and the Church's call
- Being Secularly Ad Hoc
  - No formal process or discernment
  - No structure

14

How to Prepare?

- Create questions based on the Job Description
  - Traditional
  - Hypothetical
  - Behavioral
  - Examples – Your Turn
- Decide who should participate
  - No more than three people
- Prepare Interview Form
  - Theory of Scoring
  - Example of Interview Template

15

Structure of Interview

- Part I
  - Introductions
  - Background of church and job
  - Explain the interview process
- Part II
  - Ask questions – tradition first, then hypothetical and/or behavioral
  - Allow candidate time to think and answer
  - Candidate should be doing the majority of the talking
- Part III
  - Allow Candidate to ask you questions
- Part IV
  - Thank the Candidate
  - Communicate next steps
  - Don't "ghost" them.

16

What About Volunteers?

- Should I Interview them?
  - Review application
  - Less Formal – telephone
  - Ask "why" questions
  - Be prepared to answer their questions
  - Laws that apply to volunteers

17

Cautions for Interviewing and Selection

- Know what you can and cannot ask!
- Watch out for your own gender-based biases
- Be aware of body language
- Don't fall victim to infatuation
- Educational Credentials

18

Keys to Success

"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

- Walt Disney

19

Onboarding and Training – Paid Staff

- Be Prepared!
- Suggested schedule
  - Day one
    - Introductions – cheat sheet
    - Tour
    - Paperwork and Employee Handbook – Assignment One
    - Review Essential Functions and suggested goals
    - Allow some time for initial training
    - Questions and review
  - Days Two – Four
    - Training – 50% - 70% of the day
    - Employee Handbook – Assignment Two
    - Questions

20

Onboarding and Training – Paid Staff (Cont.)

- Last Working Day of the Week
  - Allow time to work independently
  - Continue training
  - Finish reading Employee Handbook
  - Questions and Review of Week
- Decision Time
  - Most employees will need more than one week of training
  - Have additional training scheduled throughout second to third weeks

21

Volunteers – Orientation and Training

- Assign a mentor – should be a minimum of several months
- Don't make assumptions
  - How to hold a meeting
  - How to recruit
  - How to report
- Don't shorten the process

22

Goal Setting for Paid Staff and Volunteers

S - Specific
M - Measurable
A – Action Oriented
R – Realistic/Achievable
T – Time Limited

Your turn – Examples of either a measurable or action-oriented goal.

23

One-to-Ones

24

One-to-Ones – Why and How

- Why
  - Awareness of what is working or not working
    - Personal
    - Professional
    - Progress on Goals
- How
  - Always open and close in prayer
  - Be prepared and ask them to be prepared – discuss the three Ps.
  - Be a good listener and takes notes to clarify any points of discussion
  - Future oriented
  - When discussing goals – be specific
  - Close with positive feedback

Church Administration 25

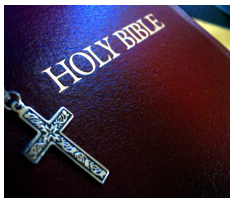
25

Conclusion

- Next Module
- Guide
- Survey
- Final Questions

Church Administration 26

26



Thank you

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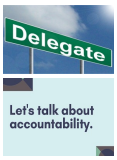
Church Administration 27

27

1

Agenda

- Background
- Delegation
- When, What, and How
- What About Volunteers
- Break
- Accountability
- Course Corrections
- Feedback/Discipline/Termination
- Reviews
- Conclusion



Church Administration 2

2

Background – What is Supervision?

What It Should Not Be	What It Should Be
• Telling someone how to do their work	• Providing resources and training
• Sharing the work	• Communicating expectations
• A chance to "fix" someone	• System for feedback conversations
• Therapy!	• System for progressive discipline
	• System for reviews
	• Time for celebrations

(From *When Moses Meets Aaron*, Rendle and Beaumont)

Church Administration 3

3

! DELEGATE !

4

4

What is Delegation and Why do We Struggle?

- Transfer of Tasks
- Obstacles to Delegation
  - I can do it faster
  - Keeper of knowledge
  - Enjoy the sense of accomplishment
  - Guilt
  - Lack of confidence
  - Ego

Church Administration 5

5

Delegation – When, What, and How

- When to Delegate
  - Time spent on small on tasks versus time spent on value-added tasks
    - My experiences
    - What happens if you don't
  - Examples of "value-added"
    - Your Turn!

Church Administration 6

6

Delegation – When, What, and How

- What to Delegate
  - Do you really need to do it?
  - Is it sensitive?
  - Do they align with anyone else's essential functions or goals?
  - Gifts, skills, experience, and knowledge – strengths/weaknesses
  - Can you communicate clearly?
  - Can you provide examples?
  - Do they have the authority and resources?
  - Can you accept mistakes?

7

Delegation – When, What, and How

- How to Delegate
  - Assign the task
    - Explanation
    - Guidelines
    - Authority and resources
    - Obtain agreement
    - Recurring timetable

8

Delegation – When, What, and How

- How to Delegate
  - Monitor the Task
    - Inform other staff
    - Check in
    - Resist the urge to criticize

9

Delegation – When, What, and How

- How to Delegate
  - Task is complete offer feedback
    - Tread lightly
    - Offer corrections
    - Don't take it back
- Don't hesitate to give praise!

10

How Does This Apply to Volunteers

- Techniques are the same but….
  - Trust
  - Motivate
  - Communicate
- Reframe your thinking
  - Whose church is it?

11

Accountability

12

What is the Right Way?

- Setting clear expectations
- Assignee has skills and resources
- How will you measure?
- Give feedback
- Consequences

13

Course Corrections

- Step One – The Feedback Conversation
  - Check your own emotional state
  - Write out what you want to communicate – be specific
- Five Steps
  - The setting
  - The conversation
  - The impact
  - Their response – watch out for deflecting
  - Solutions
- Case Study – Role Play!

14

15

Progressive Corrections/Discipline

NO DISCIPLINE IS ENJOYABLE WHILE IT IS HAPPENING.
IT'S PAINFUL! BUT AFTERWARD THERE WILL BE A
PEACEFUL HARVEST OF RIGHT LIVING FOR THOSE
WHO ARE TRAINED IN THIS WAY.
HEBREWS 12:11

16

Written Counseling

- Be aware of your own biases
- Be gracious – give the benefit of the doubt
- State the problem using clear and concise language
- Agreed upon solution
- Allow the employee to respond but be careful about excuses (deflecting)
- Allow the employee to write comments
- Signatures and retention
- Example

17

Discipline/Correction Warning

- May seem harsh – so why this step?
- Steps
  - First or second warning
  - Decide on probation or suspension – warnings!!
  - State the problem using clear and concise language
    - Think about this step – does it really warrant discipline?
  - Steps the employee must take to correct issue
  - Employee response
  - Specify time for correction
  - Signatures and retention
- Example

18

Terminations

- Seek counsel and discuss these five questions
  - Why?
  - Do you have a go-forward plan?
  - Can you clearly articulate the reason?
  - Have you given this person every chance to succeed?
  - Have you prayed and sought discernment?
- If all answers are yes, proceed as follows

19

Terminations

- The setting – always have a witness
- Be succinct
- Be kind and considerate - warning
- Explain any terms – benefits, etc.
- Retrieve any church property
- No lingering
- Staff meeting
- Case Study – Role Play

20

Reviews

21

Review vs Performance Appraisal

- Words have power
- Anxiety
- Deming Example

22

Components of a Review

- Job Description
  - Essential Functions
- Comments
- Rating Scale
  - 1 = Not Meeting Expectations
  - 2 = Meets Some but Not All Expectations
  - 3 = Meets Expectations
  - 4 = Meets All and Exceeds Some Expectations
  - 5 = Exceeds Expectations

23

Components of a Review

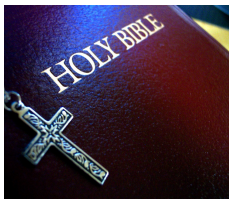
- Evaluation of Goals
  - Comments
  - Rating
- Goals for Upcoming Year (or period)
  - No more than three
- Additional Comments
- Employee Comments
- Signatures
- Example

24

Conclusion

- Next Module
- Guide
- Survey
- Final Questions

25



Thank You!

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26

1

Agenda

- How Do We View Conflict
- Biblical
- Types of Conflict
- Conflict Biases
- Constructive vs Destructive
- Impacts on Conflict
- Suggested Steps
- When to Confront
- When to Let Conflict Go
- Conclusion

Church Administration 2

2

How We View Conflict

- Do we avoid it?
- Do we believe it is harmful?
- Do we feel ill-prepared to address it?
- Can it be positive?
- How does the Bible assist?

Church Administration 3

3

Biblical Examples

- Nehemiah
- Acts
- Your Turn!
- What Did Jesus Say?
- What about Paul?
- Patience and Perseverance

"We've been wandering around in the wilderness for forty years. I'm sick of filling out change-of-address cards!"

Church Administration 4

4

Types of Conflict

- In the church
- Between you as pastor-leader and
  - employee
  - volunteer
- Between paid staff
- Between staff and volunteers

Church Administration 5

5

Sources of Conflict

- Communication
- Lack of respect
- Biases
- Personal issues
- Lack of resources
- Work environment
- Time frame
- Lack of trust
- Backgrounds
- Upheaval
- Work style

Church Administration 6

6

Conflict Biases

- Generational
- Gender
- Culture
- What are other biases?
- Your turn!

7

Constructive vs. Destructive Conflict

- What is a mindset?
  - Fixed
    - Either/Or
  - Flexible
    - And/But
  - Most of us are a combination

8

Destructive Conflict Behaviors – Fixed Mindset	Constructive Conflict Behaviors – Flexible Mindset
Using emotional arguments to deflect perceived blame	Calming emotions and presenting support for the issue and resolution
Assuming questions or comments are personal attacks	Listening for questions and accepting criticism as potential for your development
Interrupting or rejecting a point of view before you fully understand that same point of view	Actively listening to the other's point of view before commenting
Being "Devil's Advocate" because you enjoy being contrary	Being willing to disagree but open to finding a workable solution
Refusing to accept responsibility or change your mind	Being willing to accept responsibility and change your mind

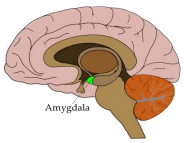
9

Psychological Assessments

- Common types
  - Myers-Briggs
  - Enneagram
  - MMPI
  - DISC
  - ETC….
- Are they accurate?
- Are they helpful?
- What are your thoughts?

10

Our Physiology



11

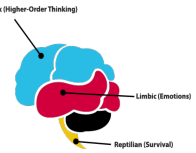
What Else Can the Amygdala Contribute

- Aggression
- Learning through reward and punishment
- Implicit memory
- Interpreting social cues
- Emotions related to parenting/caregiving
- Emotions connected to memories
- Learned behavior linked to addiction

12

"Yea Shall Overcome"

- Neocortex
  - Left Side
  - Right Side
- Understanding Nuance
  - Time
  - Self-reflection



13

"BRAVING"*

- **B**oundaries
- **R**eliability
- **A**ccountability
- **V**ault
- **I**ntegrity
- **N**onjudgment
- **G**enerosity

*Of all of these, where do you struggle?

* Acronym from Brené Brown – Braving The Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone

14

15

Conflict Management and Resolution

"A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1)

"The beginning of strife is like letting out water,
so stop before the quarrel breaks out." (Proverbs 17:14)

"If one gives answer before hearing,
it is folly and shame." (Proverbs 18:13)

16

Conflict between Pastor and Staff/Volunteer Leaders

- Stop and check your physiological state
  - Understand what is happening to you in the moment
  - Stop and control your emotions
  - Breathe
- Have you found yourself in a "highly amygdalated" state? What do you do?

17

Suggested Steps
Conflict between Pastor and Staff/Volunteer Leaders

- Write out the perceived problem
- Consider the setting
- Invite the person into the setting and open with prayer
- Watch your own body language and watch theirs
  - Warning
- Use "I" statements, not "You" statements
- Be clear and concise – just the facts

18

Suggested Steps
Conflict between Pastor and Staff/Volunteer Leaders

- Let them respond
- Be open to your contribution to the issue
- Practice reflective listening
- Keep probing – listen for words like "always" or "never"
- Respond with affirmation
- Summarize the issues

19

Suggested Steps
Conflict between Pastor and Staff/Volunteer Leaders

- Now what?
  - You may need to offer the solution
  - You may need to compromise
  - In either case:
    - Write out the solution or compromise
    - Remember the BRAVE acronym
    - Outline next steps
    - Schedule a follow-up meeting
  - Be mindful of your "emotional wake"

20

Conflict between Staff or Volunteer Leaders

21

Suggested Steps
Conflict Between Staff or Volunteer Leaders

- Are you even aware?
- Signs could include:
  - Absenteeism
  - Turnover
  - Reduction in productivity
  - Fluctuations in attitude/mood
  - Sense of tension
- Don't take over immediately
  - Train on conflict resolution
  - Encourage them to come to a solution

22

Suggested Steps
Conflict between Staff or Volunteer Leaders

- Listen to each person separately/take notes
- Bring parties together
  - Ask permission to share your perceptions
- Set the ground rules
  - The Adult Contract
- Give each one an opportunity to speak
  - No interruptions
  - Set expectations for reflective listening
  - Watch for "rudeness" and call it out gently after the person is done
  - Keep yourself neutral

23

Suggested Steps
Conflict between Staff or Volunteer Leaders

- Once they have both spoken, look for areas of:
  - Similarity
  - Divergence
- Point them out
  - If no consensus is reached, keep asking questions
  - Goal is to identity the root cause
- Ask them each for solutions
  - Keep discussing until you reach a compromise
  - Sometimes an apology is needed – you may need to prompt it
- Write down the agreement – be specific

24

Suggested Steps
Conflict between Staff or Volunteer Leaders

- What if no agreement is reached?
  - You are the head of staff/supervisor – you will need to make the decision
  - Take the time you need – Pray
  - Tell them when you will provide the decision and the reasoning
- Don't leave it too long
- Don't leave it unresolved

25

When to Confront and What Action to Take

- When
  - Argument is escalating into name-calling or abusive language
  - Breaking of safety protocol that endangers others or themselves
  - Harassment
  - Abuse
  - Actions that are illegal or immoral
- What Actions
  - Suggestions for each example – Your turn!

26

When to Let a Conflict Go

- Impasse
- Not what you want but are willing to accept
  - mostly occurs with volunteers
- But remember your vocation

27

Can Conflict Be Transformational?

- YES!
- Requires you to develop capacities
  - to see what is really happening around you
  - to develop the ability to integrate the pieces into a whole
  - to accept complexity – even embrace it
  - ability to hear and engage multiple points of view
- Learning to lean in

28

"Peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to cope with it."

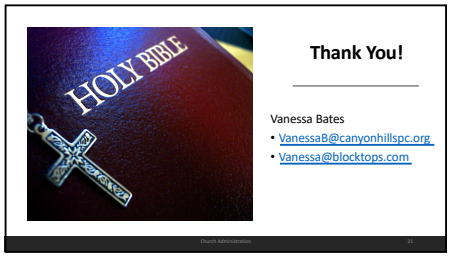
Mahatma Gandhi

29

Conclusion

- Next Module
- Guide
- Survey
- Final Questions

30


HOLY BIBLE
Thank You!
Vanessa Bates
• VanessaB@canyonhillspc.org
• Vanessa@blocktops.com
Church Administration
31

31

1

Agenda

- Biblical View
- Taxation for 501(c)(3)
- Fund Accounting
- Balance Sheet
- Income Statement
- Break
- Financial Controls
- Budgets
- Stewardship
- Conclusion

2

What Does the Bible Say about Money?

- Deuteronomy 16:17
- Proverbs 3:9
- Malachi 3:8-10
- Matthew 6:19-20
- I Peter 4:10
- I Corinthians 4:2
- To name a few……..

3

Taxation for Churches

- Publication #1828
  - Exempt from Tax
- UBIT
  - When you owe tax
- Exceptions to UBIT
- Special tax status for clergy - #1828, 22-23

4

Fund Accounting

- What is it?
- How is it different than for-profit?
  - Yes, but still under GAAP
- Restricted and Unrestricted
  - Examples
- Software programs can help!

5

Fund Accounting

- Chart of Accounts – Why do we have these?
  - 1000- numbers would include all asset accounts – cash, investments, fixed assets
  - 2000- numbers include all liability accounts – loans, payables due
  - 3000- numbers include all net asset accounts – restricted and unrestricted designated funds
  - 4000- numbers include all income accounts – pledges received, plate contributions, other income
  - 5000- numbers include all operating expense accounts – personnel, property, programs
  - 6000- numbers include all non-operating expense accounts – interest expense on loans
- Cash versus Accrual

6

The Balance Sheet

- **Non-Profit**

Assets= Liabilities + Net Assets

- **For Profit**

Assets = Liabilities + Equity

7

The Balance Sheet

- What is an Asset?
  - Tangible
  - Intangible
  - Depreciation
  - Both Current and Fixed
- What is a Liability?
  - -Debt
    - Short Term
    - Long Term
- What are Net Assets?
  - Monies in Unrestricted and Restricted(Designated) Funds less Liabilities

8

What Should I Be Looking For in the Balance Sheet

- Changes in current assets
  - Monies received
  - Expenses paid
- Declining current assets
  - Spending more than receiving
  - Could also be short-term cash flow event
  - Purposeful spending of restricted/designated funds
- Example

9

The Income Statement

10

The Income Statement

- Income Statements (Statement of Activities)
  - Activities
    - Monies received
    - Monies expensed
  - Can take several forms
    - One statement for unrestricted funds – Operating Funds Statement
    - One statement for restricted/designated funds – Restricted Funds Statement
    - Both are income statements
  - Often are tracked monthly
    - Can reflect month actual to budget
    - Can reflect YTD actual to budget

11

What Should I Be Looking For in the Income Statement

- Look for income or expenses
  - Overstated
  - Understated
  - Ask for a listing of all activity in that account
- Look at your actual to budget
  - Income - as projected, exceeding, or falling short
  - Expenses - as projected, exceeding, or saving
- Example

12

13

Financial Controls

14

Financial Controls

Four Fold Purpose:

- Ensure accurate representation of church's financial position
- Guard against mistakes and/or fraud
- Assist the church in achieving its mission and vision
- Ensure all appropriate financial regulations are met

15

Standard Financial Controls

- Personnel
- Counting and recording offerings
- Checks endorsed
- Deposit slip verified
- Regular statements to congregation
- Checks signed and authorized
- Dual signatures
- Payroll hours verified
- Verification of payroll tax deposits
- Outside payroll company
- Verification of all statements
- Financial disclosure
- Bank account reconciliation procedures
- Annual Review

16

This Seems over the Top!

"The shock and sadness of discovering church theft is never easy to bear. It is small consolation that the problem of religious embezzlement is at least as old as Judas Iscariot, the keeper of the money bag for Jesus' disciples, who helped himself to the its contents (John 12:6). Even in today's church, people are not immune to the temptation of taking what does not belong to them."

John W. Helfrich, "Tithes and Temptations" *Christianity Today.*

17

Budgets

Define Goals and Gather Data
Form Expectations; Reconcile Goals and Data
Create Budget
Monitor Outcomes; Analyze Variances
Adjust Budget, Expectations, or Goals

18

Types of Budgets

- What is a budget?
- Types
  - Zero-based Budgets
  - Line-item Budgets
  - Ministry Action Budgets

19

Budgets

Simple steps to begin the budget process:

- Income
  - Examine congregational giving for previous year
  - Examine three year trend
  - Any known increases/decreases
  - Project income
- Expenses
  - Core Functions
  - Programs
  - Project Cost increases
    - Core functions and programs
  - Project known maintenance and repair needs
  - What is the point where they equal – breakeven
- Example

20

Stewardship

What feelings does this invoke?

What is Stewardship?

How do you change our feelings and that of our congregation?

21

Stewardship

- The Bible speaks to stewardship
- Three aspects of money*
  - Practical
  - Emotional
  - Spiritual
- How can we rethink the concept of stewardship
  - All year long
- Good resources on-line

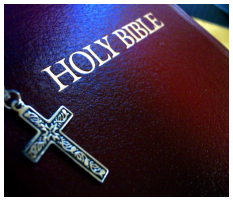
*Dave Briggs, "What I Wish I Known about Stewardship", *Christianity Today*

22

Conclusion

- Guide
- Survey
- Final Questions

23



Thank You!

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24

Appendix K: Survey Response Comments from Workshops

Comments from Survey Module 1

I enjoyed the discussion of understanding the importance of following "industry standards" while still honoring our faith when it comes to managing employees and volunteers.
8/2/2023 09:40 AM

I think this information would be very helpful for church lay leaders, but the class was labeled as "for pastors"
8/1/2023 12:19 PM

Thank you for offering these seminars!
8/1/2023 10:30 AM

This was such a strong and well-thought-out training. I am so grateful to participate in it! It's so clear how much thought and intention went into this. Two minor comments: 1. There was a short interlude where the presenter discussed body language/interview behavior. I found this to be quite biased against neurodivergent folks, introverts, and folks with invisible disabilities. The suggestions about what certain body postures and behaviors signified lacked nuance for me. I feel the presentation could be enhanced with a few statements about inclusive interviewing practices. 2. I really appreciated the multi-tasking exercise, it really drove home such an important point. However, I found the instruction-giving a little off-putting. I felt talked to like a child. This could definitely be preference, and I recognize others might not feel this way. Overall, this was such a positive experience.
7/31/2023 06:37 PM
Keep up the good work!

Comments from Survey – Module 2

n/a
8/15/2023 08:25 AM

The first module was amazing. For me, the second was good. But I think that is mainly because some of the topics (e.g., delegation) seemed remedial, but you brought new ideas to all of the topics. I deeply appreciated the termination segment, but after hanging up the call, I realized that we didn't acknowledge the dynamics of termination in a church. I wish we would have addressed termination of a staff member who is also a church member. Or termination of the secretary who has been there for 40 years. Or termination of the music director whose related to someone on Session. There are some church-specific elements to termination that are seemingly more sticky than in the business world. I know we wouldn't be able to address all of these, but there are some family bonds and family dynamics at play in a congregation that necessitate pastoral sensitivity. I also would have found it helpful because I am in all of these situations currently :)
8/14/2023 04:16 PM

Vanessa is clear as a bell -- and Danielle (I hope I'm remembering her name correctly did wonderfully keeping things in order.
8/13/2023 07:28 AM

I appreciate that you do ask if there are questions, however I would suggest that you give a little more time for people to respond especially since it sometimes takes a while to type responses and questions in the chatbox.
8/10/2023 12:52 PM

Comments from Survey – Module 3

Very informative.
8/29/2023 07:19 AM
N/A
8/28/2023 07:43 PM

The case studies were helpful and examples of responses nuanced in a way that we could see this is an art to be practiced. Thank you for the excellent content.
8/25/2023 09:23 AM

It is helpful to be given specific, concrete steps to take in different circumstances.
8/24/2023 12:52 PM

Vanessa is a quite knowledgeable church leader, and Danielle offers able assistance. I'm grateful for this opportunity to address a few personal growing edges relating to church administration!
8/24/2023 12:10 PM

I would have appreciated more conversations regarding dealing with staff conflicts, specifically how/when to bring other leaders (personnel elders, for example) into the conversation. I would also have appreciated a bit more conversation around what to do if the staff member is not willing to engage in these conversations to begin with.
8/24/2023 12:10 PM

Comments from Survey Module 4

Although Vanessa experienced technical difficulties mid-way the presentation, she dealt with them with aplomb.
9/11/2023 01:07 PM

This needs to become a course offered for and by presbyteries! Thank you for letting me be a part of this
9/11/2023 11:11 AM

Thanks for providing these sessions! This is a wonderful gift to us and to the larger church. May God bless you and guide you as you complete your D.Min. and your thesis!
9/7/2023 04:54 PM

I think it would help to address questions at the end or ask for questions at the end of each section. Sometimes, questions were brought to your attention once the topic had already changed and it seemed like there a was a bit of a rush to address the questions as they poured in. Not a big deal, just a little distracting. I think the presentation was clear, concise and helpful!
9/7/2023 03:39 PM

Thank you for a consistently superior training, both qualitatively and quantitatively!
9/7/2023 03:15 PM

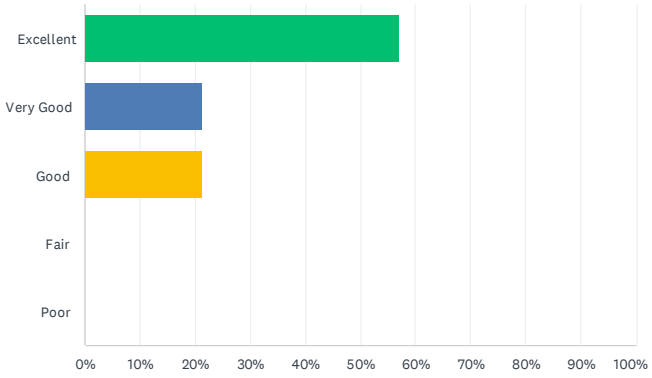
Excellent content and informative.
9/7/2023 03:15 PM

Appendix L: Disaggregated Monkey Survey Results

Module 1

Q1 How would you rate the content of the workshop?

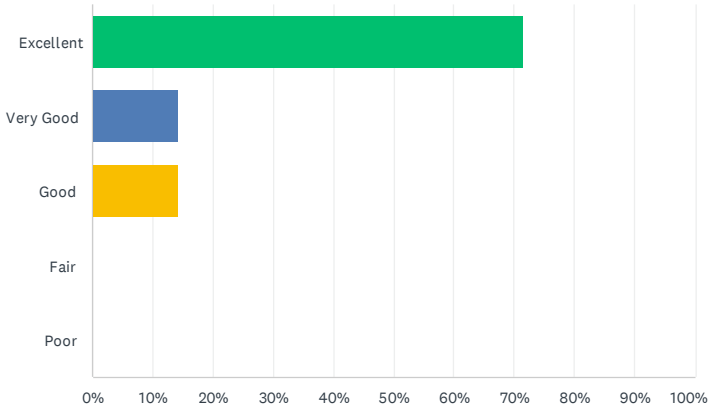
Answered: 14 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	57.14%	8
Very Good	21.43%	3
Good	21.43%	3
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

Q2 How would you rate the instructor’s presentation of the information?

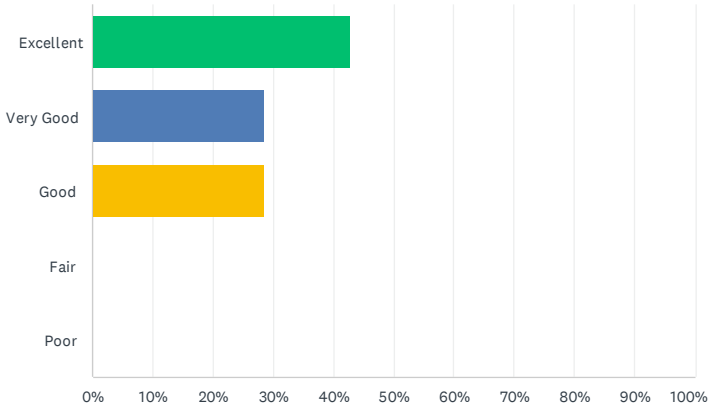
Answered: 14 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	71.43%	10
Very Good	14.29%	2
Good	14.29%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

Q3 How would you rate the ability to ask questions and interact in the workshop?

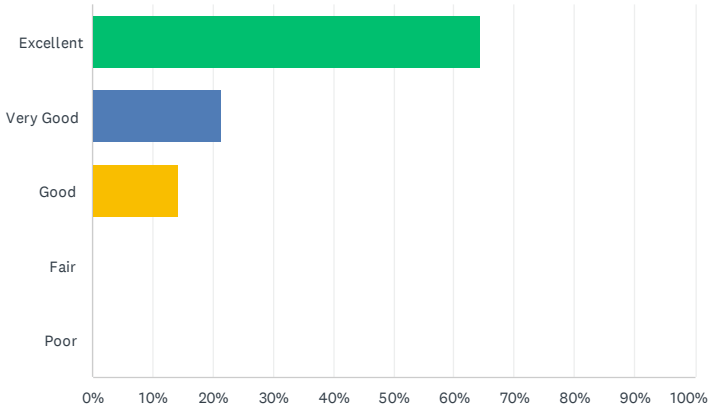
Answered: 14 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	42.86%	6
Very Good	28.57%	4
Good	28.57%	4
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

Q4 How would you rate the overall quality of this workshop session?

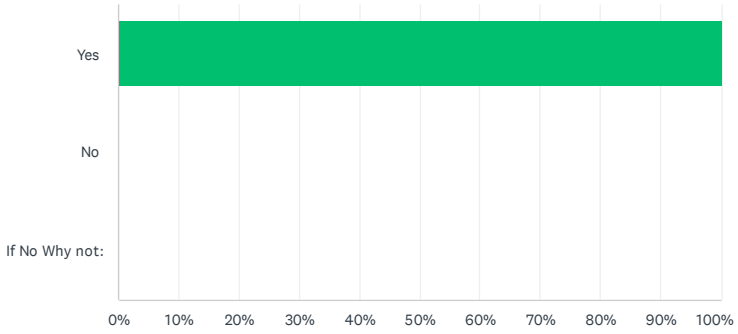
Answered: 14 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	64.29%	9
Very Good	21.43%	3
Good	14.29%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

Q5 Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0



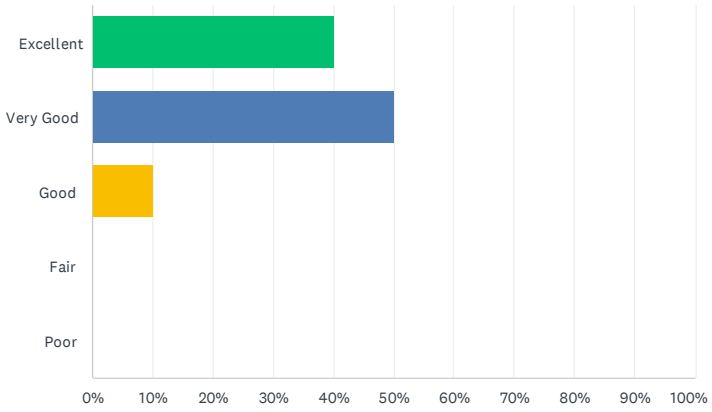
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	14
No	0.00%	0
If No Why not:	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

Q6 Additional Comments

Answered: 5 Skipped: 9

Q1 How would you rate the content of the workshop?

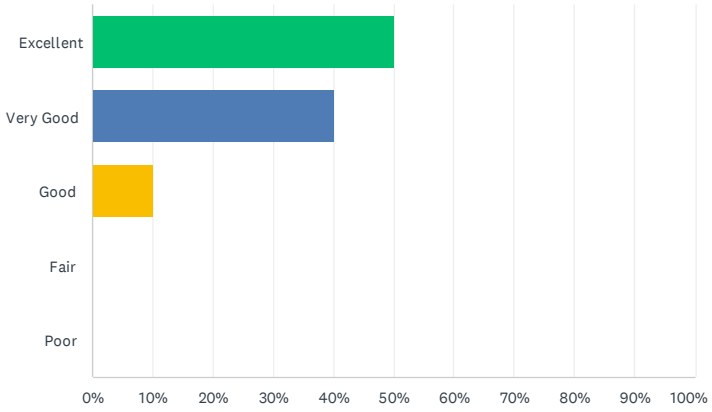
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	40.00%	4
Very Good	50.00%	5
Good	10.00%	1
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

Q2 How would you rate the instructor’s presentation of the information?

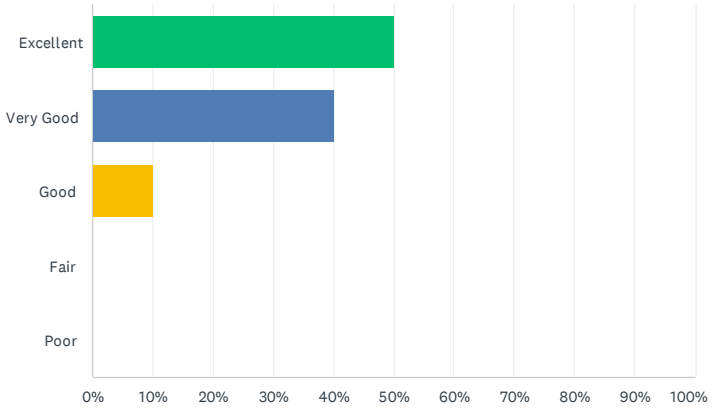
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	50.00%	5
Very Good	40.00%	4
Good	10.00%	1
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

Q3 How would you rate the ability to ask questions and interact in the workshop?

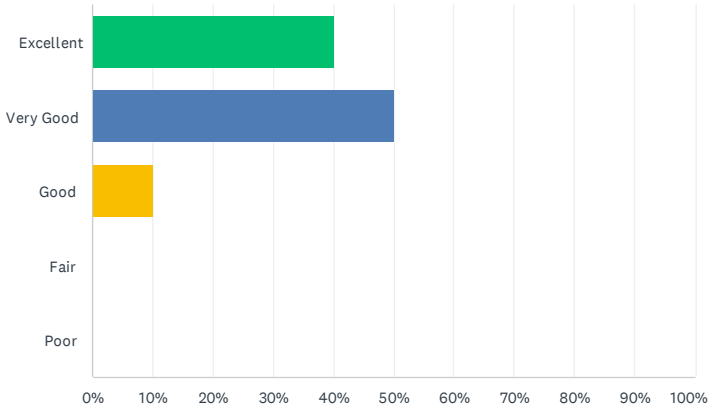
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	50.00%	5
Very Good	40.00%	4
Good	10.00%	1
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

Q4 How would you rate the overall quality of this workshop session?

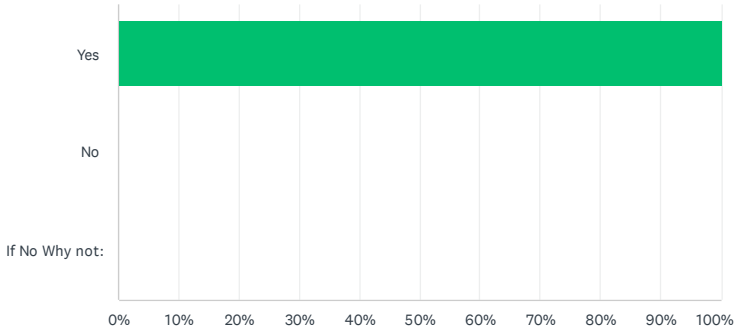
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	40.00%	4
Very Good	50.00%	5
Good	10.00%	1
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

Q5 Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



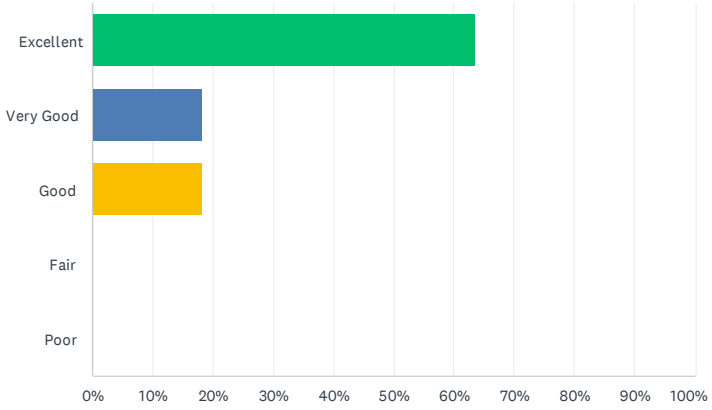
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	10
No	0.00%	0
If No Why not:	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

Q6 Additional Comments

Answered: 4 Skipped: 6

Q1 How would you rate the content of the workshop?

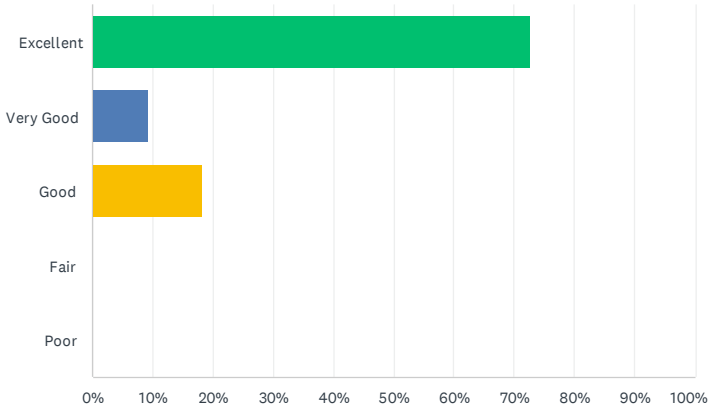
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	63.64%	7
Very Good	18.18%	2
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q2 How would you rate the instructor's presentation of the information?

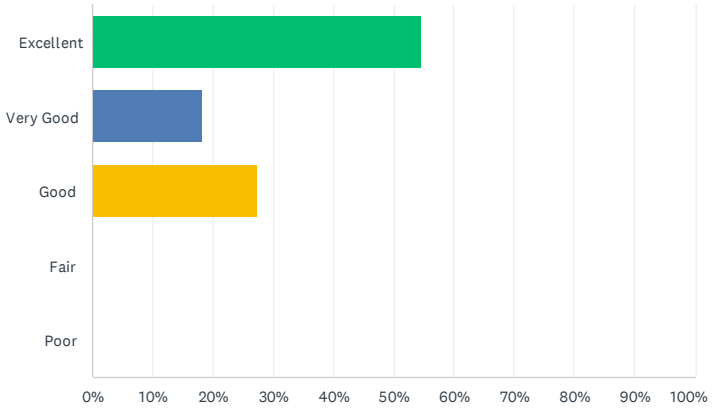
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	72.73%	8
Very Good	9.09%	1
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q3 How would you rate the ability to ask questions and interact in the workshop?

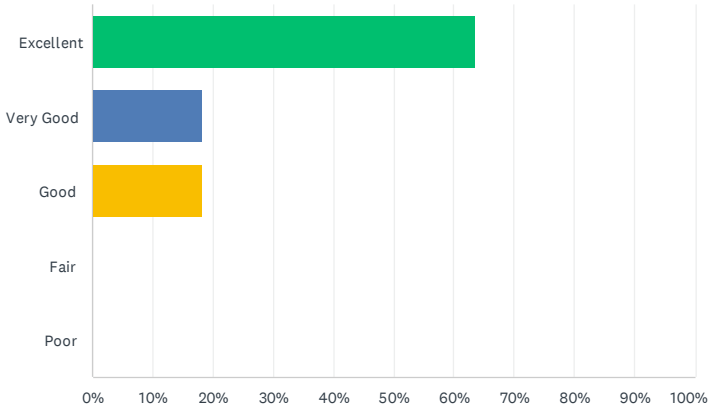
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	54.55%	6
Very Good	18.18%	2
Good	27.27%	3
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q4 How would you rate the overall quality of this workshop session?

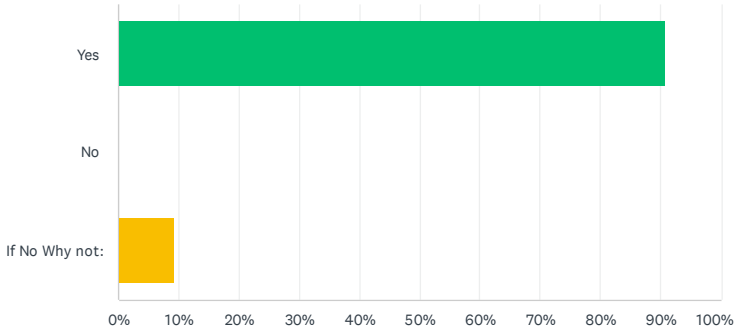
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	63.64%	7
Very Good	18.18%	2
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q5 Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



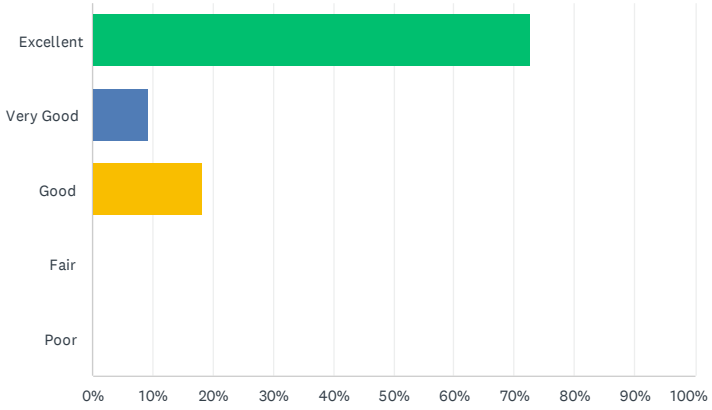
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.91%	10
No	0.00%	0
If No Why not:	9.09%	1
TOTAL		11

Q6 Additional Comments

Answered: 8 Skipped: 3

Q1 How would you rate the content of the workshop?

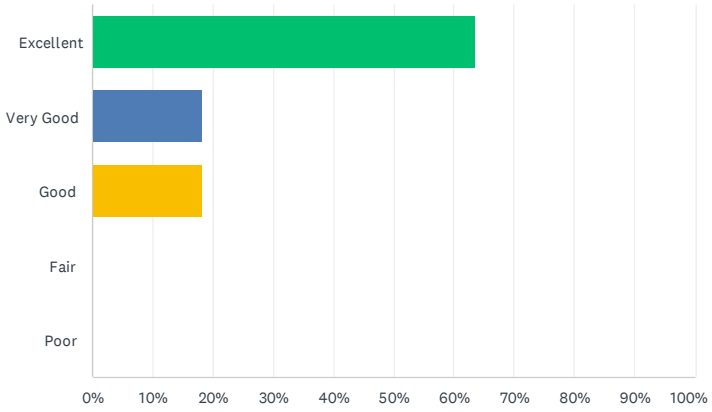
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	72.73%	8
Very Good	9.09%	1
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q2 How would you rate the instructor’s presentation of the information?

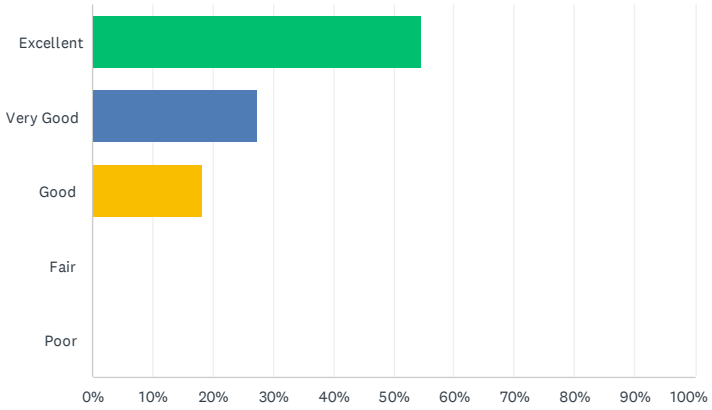
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	63.64%	7
Very Good	18.18%	2
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q3 How would you rate the ability to ask questions and interact in the workshop?

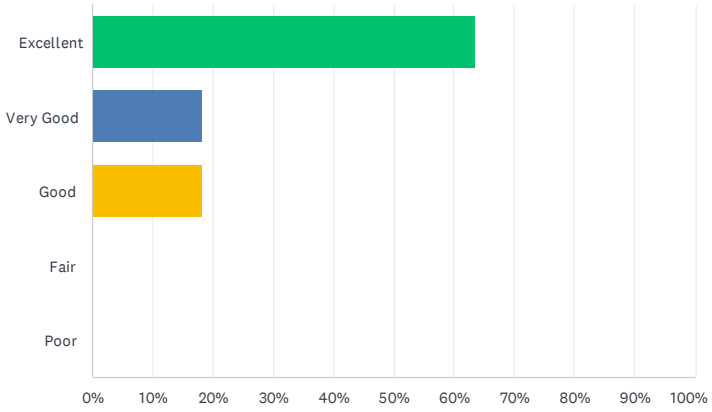
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	54.55%	6
Very Good	27.27%	3
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q4 How would you rate the overall quality of this workshop session?

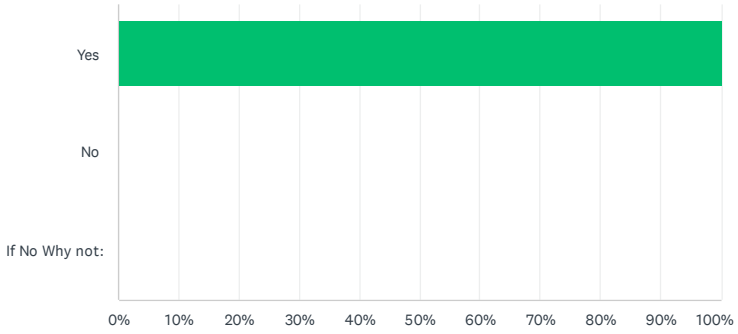
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	63.64%	7
Very Good	18.18%	2
Good	18.18%	2
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q5 Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	11
No	0.00%	0
If No Why not:	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q6 Additional Comments

Answered: 6 Skipped: 5

Appendix M: Interview Release Form

Interview Release

DMin Candidate: Vanessa Bates

You will be a subject in a DMin Project entitled: "Managing the Collision of the Secular with the Sacred: A Theology of Leadership to Improve the Administrative Skills of Pastors."

The project will take approximately one year to complete and the completed project will be shared with you if you would like to receive a copy.

During the project, you will participate in one interview of 20 - 30 minutes. Your name will not be included on any documents, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may choose not to participate at any time.

By signing this consent form you agree to participate in the project.

Signature Date:_____

Signature : _____

For any further information contact Vanessa Bates by email - Vbates@mail.nyts.edu or by phone 714-981-4539.

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